

Paradiso

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DANTE







Gustave Doré

## THE ROSE OF HEAVEN

Parad. xxxi. 1-3



# DANTE

## THE DIVINA COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE

*Translated by the late*

E. H. PLUMPTRE D.D.

*Dean of Wells*

WITH NOTES, STUDIES AND ESTIMATES

IN FIVE VOLUMES

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# PARADISE

## CANTO I

*Invocation—Ascent to the First Heaven—The Poet's Transfiguration*

THE glory bright of Him who moveth all  
 Doth penetrate the universe, and shine,  
 In one part more, while less doth elsewhere fall.  
 I to that Heaven which most His light divine  
 Receives, had come, and saw things which to tell 6  
 Lack power and skill who pass to lower line;  
 Because, the closer comes our mind to dwell  
 With that it longs for, it so deep doth go,  
 That memory faileth to renew the spell.  
 Yet all I could in my mind's treasure stow 10  
 Of that high realm of perfect holiness,  
 In this my song shall now its subject know.  
 O good Apollo! these last labours bless,  
 And make me such a vessel of thy grace,  
 That I thy dear-loved laurel may possess. 15

<sup>1</sup> As indicated in the last line of *Purgatory*, the pilgrimage through Paradise is a journey through the starry heavens, as they were conceived in the Ptolemaic system. The earth is the centre of the universe, and the nine spheres (answering to the circles of *Hell* and *Purgatory*) are those of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, and the *Primum Mobile*. Beyond all these, in what we may call the Christian addition to Ptolemy's astronomy, is the Empyrean Heaven, the dwelling-place of God, and the real abode of the blessed ones, who yet manifest themselves, according to their characters and degrees of bliss, in the lower spheres. The poem opens with what is, in fact, a reminiscence of its close. He had been in that Empyrean (l. 4), and, like St. Paul in Paradise (2 *Cor.* xii. 2-4; 1 *Cor.* ii. 9), had seen what surpassed human speech (*Conv.* ii. 4; *Ep. to C. G.* c. 24). All that he can do is to retrace his journey thither, as far as his powers allowed him.

<sup>13</sup> The poet had invoked the Muses in *H.* ii. 7, xxxii. 10, and again, specially Calliope, in *Purg.* i. 9. Now he turns from them to their Lord and Master, the source of all light and inspiration, Apollo being for him the symbol of divine illumination, as the "*sommo Giove*" of *Purg.* vi. 118 had been of the sovereignty of the Christ.

So far one peak that crowns Parnassus' face  
 Was found enough, but now, with aids from twain,  
 I needs must enter the ring's vacant space.  
 Oh, enter then my breast, and breathe again,  
 As when poor Marsyas' carcass thou didst skin, 20  
 And strip the sheath which did his limbs contain.  
 O Power Divine! if I such grace may win,  
 That I the shadow of the Kingdom blest  
 Should now make known, thus stamped my brain  
 within,  
 Thou shalt see me by thy loved laurel rest, 25  
 And with those leaves I then shall crown my head,  
 Both through my theme, and thee, owned worthiest.  
 So seldom, Father, are they gathered  
 For Cæsar's triumph or for poet's brow,  
 (O sin and shame in human natures bred!), 30  
 That joy from the Peneian leaf should flow  
 To the all-joyous Delphic deity,  
 When any eager for its wreath doth grow.

<sup>15</sup> Possibly an aspiration, like that of l. 26 and C. xxv. 9, after the outward honours of the laureate-poet.

<sup>16</sup> Of the two summits of Parnassus (*Met.* i. 316), one was sacred to Bacchus and the Muses, the other to Apollo himself (*Luc.* v. 73). S. T. Coleridge (MS. note in Cary's *Dante* in Brit. Mus.) finds a mystic meaning in the passage. "In other words, the poet says: Hitherto the poet and the moralist have sufficed, but henceforward the philosopher must be added. But how? *Hic labor est.* Both the powers of the intellect, the discursive sensuous and the rational supersensuous, must unite at their summits."

<sup>20</sup> The thought which lies on the surface is that Dante thinks of his critics with something of the same divine "scorn of scorn" which Apollo showed for Marsyas. A striking but perhaps over-subtle thought is suggested by S. T. Coleridge, as before, in a MS. note in Cary. "Dante asks for an evacuation or exinanition of all self in him, like the unsheathing of Marsyas, that so he may become a mere vessel or wine-skin of the Deity."

<sup>23</sup> Apollo is addressed as the father of all true poets. The complaint is that neither the Emperors nor the poets of his time were worthy of the laurel crown. Their failure was the guilt and shame of human wills. The lines, if written after the failure of Henry VII.'s enterprise, may be Dante's protest against the stiff-necked generation who would not recognise either their true Emperor or their true poet.

<sup>33</sup> Daphne (=the laurel) was the daughter of Peneus (*Met.* i. 452-476). Her tree ought to gladden the Delphic deity with fresh foliage when any one was found to aspire (as Dante himself was now aspiring) to the true ideal of poetry. Comp. *Purg.* xxiv 49-62.



A little spark will make the flame rise high,  
 And after me, perchance, with tones more sweet, <sup>35</sup>  
 One will so pray that Cirrha may reply.  
 At different points our mortal gaze doth greet  
 The world's great lamp, but at that point where we  
 Four circles, with three crosses blending, meet,  
 With happier course and happier stars we see <sup>40</sup>  
 It issue, and the wax of this our earth  
 Fashion and mould in more complete degree.  
 On this side noon, that midnight, neared their birth;  
 And wholly bright was all one hemisphere,  
 The other swathed in gloom through all its girth, <sup>45</sup>  
 When to the left I looked, beholding there  
 My Beatrice, turned to see the sun;  
 Never did eagle's glance so fixed appear.

<sup>34</sup> The comparison appears in *Conv.* iii. 1. Is the humility real or feigned? Did Dante think of himself as only leading the way to a higher school of poetry in the future than had obtained in the past? Did he think that better voices than his own would ask for the highest inspiration with a greater prospect of success? That view seems to me, on the whole, the truest. The thought expressed is that of one who, while conscious of great gifts, which, as in *H.* iv. 100, placed him on a level with the great poets of the world, and above all his contemporaries, feels that he has fallen "on evil tongues and evil days," and fails therefore to attain his own ideal. That consciousness of failure is, one might almost say, the note of the supreme artist. Cirrha is identified by Dante with Delphi, and so with Apollo.

<sup>37-42</sup> Matilda and Statius disappear from the scene, and the poet is alone with Beatrice. It is the dawn of the day, and the time is defined astronomically, after Dante's manner, as that when the three circles, the equator, the ecliptic, and the equinoctial colure meet, forming three crosses with the horizon. *i.e.*, when the sun is in Aries, as in *H.* i. 38-40, with all its memories of the Creation, Incarnation, and Crucifixion, and its supposed beneficent influences on plants, animals, and men. Readers will note the recurrence of the "seal and wax" imagery of *Purg.* xxxiii. 79.

<sup>44</sup> The word *quasi* is added because it was not precisely the equinox. *A v. l.* connects it, however, with *tutto*.

<sup>45</sup> Morning, or mid-day (*Purg.* xxxiii. 104), in the hemisphere of Purgatory, night in that of earth. Dante writes from his standpoint as a mortal man, not from that of the vision.

<sup>48</sup> The comparison reminds one of the hymn of Adam of St. Victor on the Evangelists, speaking of St. John—

*"Volat avis sine metâ,  
 Quo nec vates nec propheta  
 Evolvit altius,"*

and suggests that here too there is a mystic, or at least a moral, meaning. Divine Wisdom gazes upon the sun as the symbol of the Uncreated Light.

And as a second ray is wont to run  
     Forth from the first, and reascend on high, 50  
     Like pilgrim turning when his course is done,  
 So from her act, upon my phantasy  
     Through sight impressed, my own its birth did take,  
     And on the sun fixed unaccustomed eye.  
 There much may be that here the law would break 55  
     Which our sense limits, thanks to that high place,  
     Fashioned that there mankind their home might  
         make.  
 Not long I bore it, nor for such short space  
     But that I saw the sparks fly all around,  
     As molten iron from furnace flows apace. 60  
 And suddenly it seemed as day were found  
     Added to day, as though the Omnipotent  
     With yet another sun the heaven had crowned.  
 And Beatrice, with her whole gaze bent  
     On the eternal spheres, stood still, and then 65  
     I, with my glance down-turned and eyes intent,

The soul, purified and strengthened, turns to the same source of illumination. The ray passes from the sun to the eye of Beatrice, then to that of Dante, then, as a pilgrim to its home, turns to the sun again. Was there, mingling with the mysticism, a memory of the eyes of the personal Beatrice? Had Dante prepared himself for the *Paradise* by a special study, fuller than before, both of optics and astronomy? The facts that will meet us (C. ii. 64-148, xxii. 133-154, xxv. 100, xxix. 1-6) lead me to answer the latter question in the affirmative. The moment described is that selected by Ary Scheffer in his picture of "Dante and Beatrice," now in the possession of Mr. Perrins of Great Malvern.

55-57 The region made for the human race is the Earthly Paradise. There the soul gains new powers, and can gaze on what before it shrank from.

58 With a subtle adroitness Dante does not describe his ascent. All that he is conscious of is that the sun grows more and more, sparkling like molten iron. The light is that of two suns (comp. *Isai.* xxx. 26). He is, in the cosmology of the time, in the sphere of fire which revolved between the earth and the moon. Beatrice still gazes on the heavens, but his gaze, shrinking from the brightness, turns to her. And with that gaze there comes something like an apotheosis, or at least a transfiguration, of his human nature. The story of Glaucos, who, as he tasted of the plant that grew on the sea-shore, was changed into a sea-god (*Met.* v. 930), comes into his mind as a parable of his own transformation. The word "transhumanise"—to pass from the human to the divine—which Dante coins for the purpose, reminds us that we are in the scholastic period of language, which condensed a great dogma into the one word Transubstantiation. Such a change could not be told in words; it might be apprehended by those who had a like experience.

In gazing on her, felt within as when  
 Glaucos of old of that strange herb did eat,  
 Which with the sea-gods made him denizen.  
 To paint that life transhumanised unmeet 70  
 Were any words: this instance may suffice  
 Him for whom Grace keeps that experience sweet.  
 If I was then all Thou did'st last devise  
 In Thy creative work, Supremest Love,  
 Thou know'st, Who with Thy light did'st bid me  
 rise. 75  
 When that high sphere Thou dost for ever move  
 With strong desire, my thoughts towards it drew  
 By music Thou dost temper and approve,  
 It seemed as though the sky so fiery grew 80  
 With the sun's flame, that never rain nor flood  
 A lake across a wider surface threw.  
 The strange new sounds and wondrous light imbued  
 My soul with such desire the cause to know,  
 As never until then had stirred my blood.  
 And she who, as I saw myself, e'en so 85  
 Saw me, to set my troubled soul at rest,  
 Spake ere I spake, and from her mouth did flow  
 These words: "Thyself art by thyself opprest  
 With false conceptions, that thou canst not see  
 What thou would'st see, could'st thou their course  
 arrest. 90

<sup>74</sup> The Love which rules the heavens—the phrase comes from *Boeth.* ii. 8, 15. "*Cælo imperitans Amor*"—is identified in C. xxxiii. 145 with God the Creator.

<sup>76</sup> The thought is that given more fully in *Conv.* ii. 4, *Ep. to C. G.* c. 26, that the *Primum Mobile* moves with an immeasurable velocity in its desire to unite itself with the Empyrean in its eternal rest, as the dwelling-place of God. Coleridge (MS. note *ut supra* in note on l. 16) translates "Dost sempiternalise as thing desired," as against Cary's "Which Thou dost ever guide, desired Spirit;" but his rendering leaves it uncertain whether "the thing desired" is God or the sphere that he makes eternal.

<sup>78</sup> The Pythagorean and Platonic thought of the music of the spheres (C. vi. 126; *Purg.* xxx. 93) was probably learnt from Cic. *Somn. Scip.* c. 5, where the eight spheres are represented as forming a complete musical octave. With this music sounding in his ears, the pilgrim's eyes are met by a great sea of fire which flows around him. He has passed the *flammantia*

Thou art not on the earth, as seems to thee ;  
 But lightning, fleeing from its proper seat,  
 Ne'er moved as thou, who back to thine dost flee."  
 If my first doubt I thus beheld retreat,  
 Through those few words which, as she smiled them,  
 sped,  
 Within a new net tangled were my feet :  
 And thus I spake : " Awhile my wonder fled,  
 And I had rest, but now I marvel why  
 Above these bodies light I nimbly tread."  
 And she, first breathing out a pitying sigh,  
 Turned her full gaze, with such a look on me,  
 As mother on her boy's insanity ;  
 And thus began : " A law of order due  
 Have all things 'mong themselves ; a unity  
 That makes the world to God bear likeness true.  
 The higher creatures here the impress see  
 Of that Eternal Power, which is the end  
 Whereunto that self-same law must subject be.

100

105

*mœnia mundi* (*Lucret.* i. 76). He asks in his wonder, "How can these things be? The answer reveals the truth. He has, without knowing it, left the earth and is in the sphere of fire.

<sup>92</sup> Lightning leaves its own region, the sphere of fire; the soul returns to its heavenly birthplace, the object of its desires (*Purg.* xvi. 85-90; *Conv.* iv. 18), and therefore, when freed from the hindrance of sin, with an infinitely greater velocity. *Comp.* ll. 137-142.

<sup>95</sup> The grace of the original "*sorrise parolette*" is almost or altogether untranslatable. The new wonder is how he in mortal flesh can rise into the higher spheres. Is the law of gravitation suspended?

<sup>102</sup> Another study of child-nature. A reminiscence of early home-days brings before him the picture of a mother watching over a sick child in the delirium of fever. Did the marvellous precocity of which *V. N. c. 1* tells us affect for a time the boy's brain? Did the poet remember his own mother's anxious tenderness at that time?

<sup>103-105</sup> The words are an echo of Aquinas. There is a twofold order in the universe—one that which determines the relation of the parts to each other, the other that which determines the relation of the whole to God. The universe, finding thus its centre in God, so far resembles God, who is a centre to Himself (*Summ.* i. 21. 1, 47. 3, 103. 4). *Comp. Mon.* i. 6, and Hooker, *E. P.* i. 3, 4. For those who cannot read Aquinas I recommend the study of the first book of Hooker as the best training for understanding the *Paradiso*. Here, *e.g.*, his words are almost as a quotation: "Things natural . . . observe their certain laws . . . and, as long as they keep those forms which give them their being, . . . cannot be apt to do . . . otherwise than they do."

<sup>106</sup> "Here" refers not to the sphere of flame, but the order of the universe.

And in that order things diversely tend,  
 Some more, some less, according to their kind, 110  
 In nearness to the Source whence they descend.  
 To diverse ports their several ways they wind  
 O'er the great sea of Being, and each one,  
 With impulse given to seek the part assigned.  
 This beareth fire on high towards the moon ; 115  
 This is in mortal hearts the motive spring ;  
 By this the earth its form compact hath won.  
 Nor only doth this bow from off its string  
 Shoot forth the things without intelligence,  
 But those who with them Love and Reason bring. 120  
 That which thus orders all things, Providence,  
 Doth with its light the heaven keep ever still,  
 Wherein that turns whose speed is most immense ;  
 And thither now, as to site fixed by Will,  
 That bow-string's power mysterious bears us on, 125  
 Which at glad mark to aim its darts hath skill.  
 True is it that, as oft accord is none  
 Between the form and purpose of an art,  
 Through the brute matter that we work upon,

The higher creatures are those, men on earth or in Heaven, or angels, who have the power to discern that order, and to trace the vestiges of the Creator, as the Will which appoints the end to which all is subservient (*Prov.* xvi. 4 ; *Summ.* i. 44. 4). And the creatures severally, according to their relative nearness to God, tend in a stream of being, which in intelligent creatures ripens into volition, to that centre. All are seen moving on the "great sea" of existence, and so for man even death brings him, if he has been true to the law of his being, to the "haven where he would be" (*Conv.* iv. 28 ; *Summ.* ii. 9. 102 2).

115 Fire rises—so taught mediæval physics—towards the moon, as seeking its own home in the sphere of fire which lies above the air. And, with an anticipation of later thoughts, scientific and religious, Dante finds the same law working, as throughout the material universe, so in the wills of men (*Hooker, E. P.* i. 5, 1, 2).

121 The "quiet heaven" is the Empyrean, within which the *Primum Mobile* revolves (*Conv.* ii. 4).

124 The ascent of Beatrice and Dante had then been an illustration of the universal law. They gravitated *upwards*. One notes, though there is no evidence that he studied Dante, the parallelism of Keble's *Christian Year* :

"Heaven will o'ercome the attraction of my birth,  
 And I shall sink in yonder sea of light."

*Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.*

127 The thought is almost a commonplace of the schools. Art requires (1

So from this course too often doth depart 130  
 The creature, which retaineth yet the power,  
 Though thus impelled, on other lines to start,—  
 Even as one may see, when tempests lower,  
 Fire from the clouds fall—if first impulse true  
 To earth is drawn by false joy of the hour. 135  
 Nor, if I judge well, is more wonder due  
 To thy ascent than to a rivulet,  
 Which from a high mount flows the low vale through.  
 Wonder it would be if, with nought to let  
 Or hinder, thou wert seated still below, 140  
 As if on earth swift flame should linger yet.”  
 And then once more her gaze did heavenward go.

*The Heaven of the Moon—Theories of its Spots*

O YE who follow me in little boat  
 On this my voyage, eager still to hear,  
 Behind my ship that sings as she doth float,

the mind of the artist; (2) an idea conceived by him as an end; (3) material to work on. Defects in either lead to incompleteness (*Mon.* ii. 2; *Conv.* ii. 1; *Summ.* i. 15, 1, 17. 1) So in the moral and material universe there are exceptions to the law. The creature's freedom may deviate from the path which leads to its final good; the fire may fall from the cloud, contrary to its nature. The error of the free agent is explained, as in *Purg.* xxx. 131, by his being misled by false shows of good. But of the soul in its true state it may be said as Milton's rebel angels say, "Descent and fall to us is adverse." "You don't wonder," says Beatrice, "when a river flows down; why should it seem strange that man should rise?" The wonder and the pity of it is that men are so often willing that it should be otherwise, and live like Milton's Mammon, with "looks downward bent."

<sup>1</sup> A parallel and a contrast to *Purg.* i. 1-3. The poem is no longer a "navicella," but a ship which other boats follow. Like another Gideon (*Judg.* vii. 3), he bids all turn back except the noble few. In words which seem addressed prophetically to those who, like Voltaire and Goethe, Leigh Hunt and Savage Landor, have turned away in weariness and distaste from the philosophy and theology of the *Paradiso*, he warns those who have followed him hitherto that they had better turn to the shore. He is about to sail on an untried sea. Like Lucretius, he treads the "*avia Pieridum loca*," and passes beyond the "fiery ramparts of the world" (i. 76).

Turn now and look where yet your shores appear ;  
 Into the wide sea put not out, lest ye, 5  
 Me losing, should have not whereby to steer.  
 Where I sail on none yet hath tracked the sea ;  
 Breeze doth Minerva give, Apollo lead,  
 And Muses nine point out the Bears to me.  
 Ye other few, who stretched your necks indeed 10  
 Betimes in seeking for the angels' bread,  
 Whereon, though still unsated, here we feed,  
 Through the deep sea your voyage may be sped  
 Right well, if ye will keep my furrowed way  
 Upon the water, now more smoothly spread. 15  
 Those heroes old, who sailed where Colchos lay,  
 Wondered not half so much as ye will do,  
 When they a ploughman's part saw Jason play.  
 The concreate thirst, which lasts the ages through,  
 Of that realm deiform upbore us high, 20  
 Swift as the heavens which ye revolving view ;  
 And Beatricè upward looked, and I  
 On her ; and, e'en in such time as in air  
 The bolt fixed in the cross-bow forth doth fly,  
 I saw myself arrived where wonder rare 25  
 Drew my gaze on it. Wherefore she—from whom  
 I could not hide one thought of anxious care—

<sup>9</sup> A *v. l.* gives *nuove* for *nove*, "new Muses," but is probably the reading of an "improver" on Dante. Had the Muses been "new" we should have had also a new Minerva and Apollo. The Bears = Ursa Major and Minor include the Pole Star as the guide of sailors.

<sup>10</sup> The "bread of angels" (*Ps.* lxxviii. 25), the manna of the wilderness, is with Dante a favourite symbol of the higher wisdom (*Conv.* i. 1). On earth men live by it, but are never fully satisfied (*Ecclus.* xv. 3, xxiv. 21), for we "know in part." Those who have eaten of that bread betimes, and they only, can follow him, and they must take care to keep in his wake.

<sup>16</sup> For the wonder of the Argonauts when they saw Jason plowing with a yoke of fire-breathing oxen, see *Met.* iii. 120. Comp. C. xxxiii. 96.

<sup>19</sup> The thirst is perpetual, for the ocean of Wisdom is inexhaustible (*Ecclus.* xxiv. 29). The "deiform" kingdom (C. i. 105) is pre-eminently the Empyrean Heaven.

<sup>21</sup> The ascent is as rapid (1) as the motion of the starry heavens, which apparently revolve round the earth in twenty-four hours ; (2) with a more familiar image, as a bolt shot from a cross-bow ; and it takes them to the sphere of the moon, the first planet of the Ptolemaic system.

<sup>27</sup> A *v. l.* gives *ovra* for *cura* without much affecting the sense.

Turned to me in her beauty's joyous bloom.

"Raise thankful heart to God," she said, "who  
thus

In the first planet hath for us found room." 30

It seemed as though a cloud had covered us,  
Translucent, solid, dense, and full of light,

Like diamond struck by sunbeam glorious ;

Within itself that pearl eternal, bright,

Received us, as a pool receives a ray, 35

Nor doth its mirror-surface disunite.

If I a body was—and here no way

We know two solids in one space may fare,

As needs if body into body stray—

So much the more should strong desire appear 40

To see that Essence in the which is seen

How with man's nature God His own can share.

THERE shall we see what here by faith hath been

By us received unproved, but then shall be

Self-witnessed, as first truths man's credence win. 45

I made reply: "Dear Lady, gratefully

With all my soul my thanks to Him I give

Who from that mortal world hath lifted me :

<sup>33</sup> We note the contrast between the poet's conception of the moon's appearance as a diamond on which the sun shines, a lucid "eternal pearl," and that which we find in Milton after Galileo's telescope had revolutionised men's thoughts of the heavens (*P. L.* iv. 606-609, vi. 12). The term "pearl" is applied to Mercury also (*C.* vi. 127).

<sup>37</sup> A new miracle presents itself. Dante, with his body subject to the laws of bodies, has entered another body. Here science pronounced that two bodies could not be in the same space at the same time (*Summ.* i. 67, 2), *naturaliter*, but only "*virtute Dei*" (*Summ.* iii. *Suppl.* 63. 2-4).

<sup>40</sup> The physical wonder leads on to the thought of the yet greater mystery of the Incarnation, the "perfect God and perfect Man," two natures in One Person, as in the language of the Creed, with which Dante was familiar, and the teaching of which he reproduces in *C.* xxxiii. Comp. also the *Credo* ascribed to him.

<sup>43</sup> "THERE" is the life eternal. What we now accept in faith, unproved, not as the result of deductive or inductive reasoning, but on the authority of Scripture and the Church, will then seem to us as an axiom, self-evident as the primal truths which are now the foundation of all reasoning. I will not enter on the discussion whether Dante thought of these as known intuitively, or received by an unconscious induction through the senses or by inherited experience.



But tell me what those dark spots we perceive  
 In this same body are, which down below 50  
 Make common folk the tale of Cain believe."  
 She smiled a little, and then said: "If so  
 The thoughts of mortals are in error found,  
 Where key of sense fails through the wards to go,  
 No shafts of wonder should thy soul astound, 55  
 Since now thou dost perceive that, following  
 sense,  
 The wings of reason move in narrowest bound.  
 But tell me what to thy intelligence  
 They seem." And I: "The varied aspect here  
 Is caused, I deem, by bodies rare and dense." 60  
 And she: "That thought of thine shall soon appear  
 In falsehood sunk, if thou wilt list to me  
 While I my adverse reasonings bid thee hear.

<sup>49</sup> The episode stands on somewhat the same footing as the embryology of *Purg.* xxv. Dante has embraced a new scientific theory, and it has for him an irresistible fascination. He must correct the false theories of others and of his own earlier years. In *Conv.* ii. 14 he had discussed the same question—one of the favourite problems of mediæval physics—and had explained the moon's spots, as he does here (following Averrhoës), as arising from the different degrees of density in the moon's substance, some of the sun's rays penetrating farther than others, and therefore reflected with a diminished lustre. Now he explains them as caused by variations in the formal principle of luminosity. Roger Bacon alone, or all but alone, among the physicists of his time, taught with a like confidence the same theory. The moon's light with him is not reflected, but the proper light of the moon evolved through virtue of the sun from the potency of its matter (*Op. Tert.* c. 37). The coincidence takes its place in the list which make it probable that the two thinkers may have met, and that Bacon may have been to Dante what Galileo was to Milton (*C. R.* Dec. 1881). There is, however, if I mistake not, here also, as in *Purg.* xxv., a dogmatic bearing underlying the apparently physical discussion which gives it a new significance. The text of the "two great lights" (*Gen.* i. 16) was the favourite argument of the Popes who claimed authority over the Empire. The sun and the moon were symbols of the Church and the State, and the moon derived its light from the sun. "No," is Dante's answer. "I admit the symbolism, but I deny the fact. The moon shines by its own light. The Empire has its own independent rights." *Comp. Mon.* iii. 4. For the legend of Cain see *H.* xx. 126, and Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths*, pp. 190-209.

<sup>56</sup> We note the parallel with F. Bacon's phrase, "flying on the wings of sense . . ." as he allegorises the myth of Icarus.

<sup>60</sup> Rarity seems identified by Dante with translucency. An eclipse of the sun shows that there is no such translucency in any part of the moon.

In the eighth sphere full many an orb we see  
 Which, in their *quale* and their *quantum* too, 65  
 Of many a diverse kind and aspect be.  
 If rare and dense alone all this could do,  
 Then would be found in all one power alone,  
 In measure more or less proportioned true.  
 Virtues diverse are as the product known 70  
 Of formal causes, and, save one, all these  
 Would be on that hypothesis o'erthrown.  
 Again, if those dark spots thy vision sees  
 Were caused, as thou deem'st, by their rarity,  
 Either this orb throughout were ill at ease, 75  
 Its matter thinned, or, as in bodies lie  
 The fat and lean in layers, so would this  
 A change of pages in its book supply;  
 And it were seen, on that hypothesis,  
 Transparent in the sun's eclipse, as when 80  
 Through rarer bodies light transmitted is.  
 This is not so, and we may reason then  
 Of that thy second premiss, which, if I  
 Confute, thy view will false appear to men.  
 If through the whole pass not this rarity, 85  
 Then must there be a boundary from whence  
 Its opposite permits no passing by;

<sup>64</sup> By a *tour de force*, in which he felt, it may be, a conscious pride, as Milton obviously felt in his exposition of what he had learnt from Galileo (*P. L.* iii. 111), Dante puts a lecture, like his treatise *De Aquâ et Terrâ*, into eighty-eight lines of his *terza rima*. Each argument is distinctly stated: (1) The eighth sphere, that of the fixed stars, presents variations of brightness, one star differing from another star in glory; but there we do not bring in the reflection theory, with its appendages of denser and rarer portions in the moon's structure, as an explanation, but are content to ascribe their brightness and other virtues to their own proper formal causes. The words are almost a quotation from the treatise just mentioned (*Aq. Ter.* c. 21).

<sup>85</sup> It might be replied that the translucent matter did not go through the moon, but existed to such an extent as to put the portions which reflected the sun's rays at widely different distances, and so to produce different degrees of brightness. The answer is found in an experiment with mirrors (lead mirrors, as in *H.* xxiii. 25), entirely after Roger Bacon's manner (*Op. Tert.* c. 37. 11, 13). The brightness of the reflection of a luminous point did not vary with the distance of the mirror.

And so the foreign rays, reflected thence,  
 Are as the colours mirrored from a glass,  
 Which hides a leaden surface from our sense. 90  
 Now, thou wilt say that there more dim doth pass  
 The sunbeam than from any other place,  
 As further back reflected in the mass.  
 But that objection shall give way apace  
 Before experience, if thou wilt it prove, 95  
 To which, as fount, all streams of art you trace.  
 Take thou three mirrors, two of them remove  
 From thee at equal distance, and the last  
 Between the two, and further from them, move;  
 And turned towards them let a light be cast, 100  
 Behind thy back, upon those mirrors three,  
 So that from all reflected rays are passed.  
 Then, though the light which furthest stands from  
 thee  
 May not with them in magnitude compete,  
 Yet will it shine in brightness equally. 105  
 Now, as before the sun's rays in their heat  
 The substance of the snow is naked seen,  
 Stript both of hue and cold that erst did meet,  
 So thee, to thy pure reason left, I mean  
 To fill with such a clear and living light, 110  
 That it shall dazzle thee with radiant sheen.  
 Within the heaven where peace divine its site  
 Hath found, revolves a body whose content  
 In all its power from that heaven draws its might.

<sup>91</sup> What Beatrice puts into the mouth of Dante is found almost *totidem verbis* in Avicenna (*De Cal.* ii. 4, 61).

<sup>107</sup> As snow melts under the sun's rays, so will Dante's ignorance vanish before the light of truth. The "subject" of the snow may be either, scholastically, the substance, as distinguished from the accidents of form and colour, or more probably, etymologically, the earth that lies beneath the snow.

<sup>112</sup> The lines that follow set forth the ideal plan of the Ptolemaic system. The Empyrean, the abode of God, encircles all; within it revolves the *Primum Mobile* (how far the *Primum Mobile* impresses its motion upon the other spheres Dante (*Conv.* ii. 6) thinks it presumptuous to inquire), and then the sphere of the fixed stars (l. 64). Then come the spheres of the

Next this the heaven, which is with stars besprent, 115  
 This power through divers natures doth divide,  
 Distinguished from it, yet within it pent.  
 The other spheres, in series varying wide,  
 All things with several qualities endow,  
 Each, e'en in germ, to its true end applied, 120  
 These organs of the world move onward so,  
 As thou see'st now, degree upon degree,  
 Swayed from above and swaying those below.  
 Look well on me, how I am leading thee  
 Up to the truth which thou dost crave to learn, 125  
 That thou to cross the ford alone may'st see.  
 These powers and motions of the spheres that turn,  
 As the smith wields the hammer's ponderous might,  
 Must needs wheel on, by blessed Movers borne.  
 And that same heaven, made fair by many a light, 130  
 From the high Mind that doth its motion sway,  
 The image takes, and with its seals aright.  
 And, as your soul, within its house of clay,  
 Through different members, severally designed  
 To different powers, still finds its separate way, 135

planets, each receiving an influence from above, and transmitting it below, ordering their several attributes both to their appointed results and to the seeds or potencies that produce them (*Purg.* xxx. 110; *Conv.* ii. 7, 14, iv. 21). Dante borrows here from Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 106, 4), as he from Dionysius the Areopagite (*Hier. Cæl.* c. 15).

<sup>126</sup> The triumph of the discoverer of a new birth reminds us of Æsch. *Ag.* 757, "I, apart from others, alone in thought." For the simile of the ford, comp. *Purg.* viii. 69.

<sup>128</sup> The movement of the hammer implies the smith (*Mon.* iii. 6; *Conv.* i. 13, iv. 4; *Brun. Lat. Trés.* ii. 30; *Arist. De An.* ii.): so that of the spheres implies agents that move them, and these, as ministers of God, must be angels. (*Comp. H.* vii. 74; *Conv.* ii. 6; *Canz.* 14; *Summ.* i. 210. 3.)

<sup>130</sup> The "mind" that moves the sphere of the fixed stars is not that of God, but of the angel of the cherubic order, who is its appointed guardian (*Conv.* ii. 6). It receives from above an impress which becomes in its turn a seal, and leaves its impression on the spheres below.

<sup>133</sup> The comparison comes from the *Timæus* of Plato (p. 29), probably through *Æn.* vi. 726-727—

"Spiritus intus alit, totamque, infusa per artus,  
Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet."

As the soul, working through its several senses, retains its unity, so does the angelic intelligence which works through the starry sphere. The

So spreads its goodness that supremest Mind,  
 Through all the stars in phases manifold,  
 Revolving still in unity defined;  
 And diverse virtues diverse compounds mould  
 With bodies precious which they animate, 140  
 Wherein, as life in you, their place they hold.  
 Through the glad nature which doth radiate,  
 The infused virtue shines through body bright,  
 As gladness doth your eyes illuminate.  
 Hence comes it that there seems 'twixt light and  
 light 145  
 This variance, and not from dense and rare:  
 This is the formal cause which works in might,  
 Proportioned to its goodness, dull or clear."

## CANTO IIII

*Diversity of Rewards—Unity of Blessedness—The Souls who  
 have not kept their Vows—Piccarda—Constance*

THAT sun which erst with love had warmed my breast,  
 Had, proving and reproving, shown to me  
 The sweet aspect of truth with beauty blest;  
 And I, to own myself from error free,  
 And firm in faith as far as met the need, 5  
 Lifted my head as if for colloquy.

different virtues of each sphere combine in like manner with its material fabric, "precious" as being eternal, and shine through it, as joy manifests itself in the human eye. And so the spots in the moon, as its greater and lesser brightness, are the results of different degrees of the formal principle of luminosity. A. J. Butler quotes the touching confession of P. Dante, the son who could not fathom his father's knowledge, "*Alia per te vidi, imo omnia, quia nil vidi, nec intellexi.*" We are reminded somewhat painfully of Molière, "*L'opium endormit, parcequ'il a une vertu soporifique.*"

<sup>1</sup> The sun is, as in C. xxx. 75, Beatrice, as illuminating and vivifying Dante's intellect. So Virgil in *H.* xi. 91, and Philosophy in *Conv.* iv. 1.

<sup>3</sup> The two words "*provando e riprovando*," proving truth and refuting error, are said to have been taken as a motto by the Florentine Experimental Academy (*Accad. del Cimento*) as the true method of scientific discovery.

But then a vision came and bade me heed,  
 And fixed my gaze with such a binding spell,  
 That my confession I forgot to speed. 10  
 E'en as in mirror clear and bright, or well  
 Of waters pure and tranquil and serene,  
 So deep, its bottom is just visible,  
 The features of our face by us are seen  
 So faintly that a pearl on snow-white brow  
 Meets not our gaze with stroke less quick and 15  
 clean,  
 So many faces prompt to speak I now  
 Beheld, and into opposite error ran  
 To his who love did to the fountain vow.  
 And I, when to perceive them I began,  
 Esteeming them as mirrored semblance vain, 20  
 Turned mine eyes round me, whose they were to  
 scan;  
 And nothing saw, and turned them back again,  
 Straight to the light of that my sweetest Guide,  
 Within whose holy eyes bright smiles did reign.  
 "Let not thy spirit be with wonder tried," 25  
 She said, "because I smiled at thy young thought,  
 Since still thy foot from Truth's firm base doth  
 glide,  
 And turns thee, as is wont, to shadowy nought.  
 True substances are these which thou dost see,  
 Here set apart through vow they left unwrought. 30

10 We seem to see the poet still in his optical laboratory. He sees as "through a glass darkly" (not in this instance in a mirror) faces that gleam through the moon's light, as a pearl is seen on a white forehead. Did he remember such a pearl on Beatrice's brow (*V. N. c. 37*)? I take *persi*, as in *H. v. 89, vii. 103*, for "dark," not as = *perduti*.

17 Narcissus (*Met. iii. 415*) mistook the reflection of his own form for reality. Dante mistook the real faces for reflections, and therefore looked behind him. We note the association of ideas with *C. ii. 97*.

26 *Coto*=thought, is derived from *coitare=cogitare* (*Diez. p. 106*). It is said to have been commonly used by boys in their games at hide-and-seek, who, when they had found the thing sought for, cried out "*Coto!*" and is therefore, perhaps, used with a special appropriateness (*Scart.*).

30 The words are the first that indicate the character of the souls who

Wherefore speak with them; hear, believing be;  
 For the true light which them doth satisfy  
 Permitteth not their feet from it to flee."  
 And to that shade which seemed most eagerly  
 Converse to crave I turned, beginning so, 35  
 As one on whom strong wish weighs heavily.  
 "O Spirit, made for good, in whom doth glow  
 The sweetness of the rays of life eterne,  
 Which he who tastes not ne'er can fully know,  
 To me 'twill grateful be if I may learn 40  
 Somewhat about thy name and thine estate."  
 Then she with laughing eyes did promptly turn,  
 And said: "Our charity ne'er bars the gate  
 To just desire, no more than this is done  
 By That which wills that all it imitate. 45  
 I in the world was known as virgin nun;  
 And if on me thou turn thy mind and eye,  
 Though now more fair, I shall not be unknown;  
 But thou in me Piccarda wilt descry,  
 Who, with the other blessed ones placed here, 50  
 Am blest in sphere that moves most tardily.  
 All our desires, that kindle bright and clear,  
 In the joy perfect of the Spirit blest,  
 Rejoice, as each His order's mark doth bear.

dwell in the moon's sphere, as the emblem of the mutability which, though it had not kept them out of Paradise, had yet placed them in the lowest of its spheres.

<sup>34</sup> The soul is that of Piccarda, the sister of Corso and Forese Donati (*Purg.* xxiv. 10 n.). She entered the convent of St. Clara (the "Poor Clares" of the followers of St. Francis). Her brothers forced her into a marriage with Rossellino della Tosa. Corso was said (*Ott.*) to have done penance in his shirt for his offence, and Piccarda was removed by her death, for which she was said to have prayed (*Beniv.*), from her earthly to her heavenly bridegroom. Line 49 implies that Dante had known her personally, though at first (l. 59) he does not recognise her in her glorified beauty. So he had been slow, for a different reason, to recognise Forese (*Purg.* xxiii. 43).

<sup>44</sup> The will of the blessed is one with the love of God, who wishes all to be conformed to His own likeness.

<sup>51</sup> In the Ptolemaic system, the moon, as the lowest sphere, was also the slowest in its movements.

And this same lot, which seems so low deprest, 55  
 Is given to us because of our neglect,  
 Which in some point made void our vows profest."  
 And I: "In thy most wondrous fair aspect  
 There shines I know not what of the divine, 60  
 Transfiguring thee from what I recollect;  
 Hence slow of memory was this mind of mine;  
 But now what thou hast told me comes in aid,  
 So that I trace thee clear as Latin line.  
 But tell me, ye who here are happy made, 65  
 Do ye desire to gain a loftier place,  
 To see more, make more friends?" With many  
 a shade  
 That near her stood, she first, with smiling face,  
 Looked on me, then made answer with such joy,  
 She seemed to glow with fire of love's first grace:  
 "Brother, the might of Love gives such employ 70  
 To our desires, that it can make us will  
 Just what we have, unmixed with thirst's alloy.  
 If we desired to pass on higher still,  
 Then our desires would be at variance found  
 With His who bids us here His mansions fill: 75  
 This thou wilt see in these spheres hath no ground,  
 If love be still the one thing needful here,  
 And if its nature thou search well all round.

<sup>55</sup> The lot appears great to the pilgrim who has just entered Paradise, and yet is really the "least in the kingdom of heaven."

<sup>64</sup> The question was one which had almost from the first occupied the minds of Christian thinkers—Augustine (*C. D.* xxii. 30), Jerome (*adv. Jov.* ii.), Gregory of Nazianzus (*Orat.* xxvii. 8), and many others. On earth men naturally desire a greater happiness than they have, and are thus tempted to covetousness and envy. In Heaven, according to the teaching of Hugo of St. Victor, which Dante reproduces, there is no envy. The will of every blessed soul is in entire harmony with the Divine will, and finds in it all the bliss and peace of which it is capable (*De Sacr. Fid.* ii. xviii. 20; *Instit. Mon. de An.* iv. 15, in *Scart.*). So Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 1, 19, 10). Comp. *Ozan.* p. 168.

<sup>66</sup> The words point to the sources of joy: (1) the Beatific Vision; (2), the Communion of Saints, the joy itself increasing with the number of those with whom we are in fellowship. The phrase seems taken from *Luke* xvi. 9.



So of our bliss this is cause formal, clear,  
 That each upon God's will himself should stay, 80  
 That so our wills may all one Will appear.  
 So our whole realm rejoiceth in the way  
 In which from stage to stage we upward mount,  
 As doth the King whose Will doth our wills sway;  
 And in His Will of our peace is the fount; 85  
 That is the Sea whereto all beings move,  
 Which as its works or Nature's works we count."  
 Full clearly then her words to me did prove  
 How everywhere in Heaven is Paradise,  
 Though not on all alike God's grace pours love. 90  
 But as it is when one food satisfies,  
 And for another longs our appetite,  
 One asks for this; for that, "No, thanks," replies;  
 So I in act and word did her invite  
 To tell me what that web was wherein she 95  
 Plied not the shuttle to the end aright.  
 "Her perfect life and merit great," to me  
 She said, "insphere more high, a maid whose train  
 Obedient, with her garb and veil agree,  
 That they may watch or sleep, till death they gain, 100  
 With that true Spouse who every vow will own,  
 Which love to His good pleasure doth constrain.

<sup>86</sup> The sea of Divine love, to which all souls tend, as that of C. i. 113 had been of the life that pervades the universe.

<sup>82-87</sup> I do not often stop to point out beauties which are better felt, but most readers will, I think, agree that these six lines are among the noblest in the whole poem.

<sup>91-96</sup> Of Dante's two questions, (1) whether the souls of the blessed were content each with its own portion? (2) how it was that Piccarda had broken her vow, and what had been the effects of that broken vow on her state in heaven? the first had been answered; the second was yet to seek. Beatrice had not drawn the shuttle to the end of the web.

<sup>98</sup> The lady is St. Clara, of the family of Sciffi, at Assisi, *b.* 1194. In 1212, under the guidance of St. Francis, she took vows of poverty and chastity in the Church of the Portiuncula, and became the head of a sisterhood conspicuous for its austerity and good works. She died in 1253, and was canonised by Alexander IV. in 1255. The Order, known as the "Poor Clares," spread through all the cities of Italy, and even into Germany and Bohemia.

To follow her I did the world disown  
 In girlhood's prime, and in her garb was drest,  
 And vowed to take her order's path alone ; 105  
 But men, with worst more conversant than best,  
 Stole me from out the cloister's dear retreat :  
 What my life then was is to God confest.  
 And this bright form which here thy gaze doth meet  
 Upon my right, and is illuminèd 110  
 With all the light that makes our sphere complete,  
 Hears what I say as though of her 'twere said.  
 She was a Sister, and from her was torn  
 The shadow of the blest veil round her head ;  
 But when she backward to the world was borne, 115  
 Against her will, against all custom right,  
 For ever on her heart the veil was worn.  
 Of great Costanza here is seen the light,  
 Who to the second Suabian storm-blast bore  
 The third, and last, of line of puissant might." 120

106 The men referred to are the two Donati brothers. Commentators have seen in the suppression of the name a delicate consideration on the poet's part for the feelings of his wife, but (?). He had not shrunk from writing hard things of them in *Purg.* xxiv. 82, 115.

108 The outline is left to be filled up. Remorse, patient endurance, rigorous asceticism, prayers to depart and be at rest, may all be included in the pregnant words, as full of meaning as those which tell the story of La Pia (*Purg.* v. 133).

109 The "other splendour" is Constance, daughter of Roger, king of Sicily, and granddaughter of Robert Guiscard. Her nephew, William the Good, who succeeded to the throne on the death of his father William the Bad, had no issue, and Constance was therefore presumptive heiress to the crown. Her brother William had placed her in the convent of St. Salvatore, as an alternative to putting her to death. Frederick Barbarossa, anxious to add Sicily to his dominions, brought about a marriage between Constance and his son Henry VI. Celestine III. gave her a dispensation from her vows, and at the age of thirty-one or thirty-seven (some chroniclers say fifty) she was married to Henry, who was then only twenty-one. After seven years of barrenness she gave birth, with circumstances of publicity and precaution which remind us of the confinement of Mary Beatrice of Modena, to a son, who, as the Emperor Frederick II., grew up to fulfil the prediction of the Abbot Joachim of Calabria, that he would be the torch to set all Italy on fire. That monarch Dante sorrowfully looks on as the last of his line, the last of the true emperors (*Barl.* p. 340; *Arriv.* p. 6; *Kington*, i. c. 1).

So spake she, and began her strain to pour,  
 "Ave Maria," parting, with that song,  
 As sinks a stone by deep pool covered o'er.  
 My gaze, which followed her for full as long  
 As it was possible, when she was gone, 125  
 Turned to the object of a love more strong,  
 And all to Beatrice wandered on ;  
 But she so flashed her lightnings on mine eye,  
 My sight at first no strength to meet it won,  
 And that caused me to question tardily. 130

## CANTO IV

*The Poet's Questions—Do Souls return to the Stars?—Free-  
 will and Force as Factors in Broken Vows*

BETWEEN two dainties, distant equally  
 And tempting, a free man would waste away  
 Ere he his teeth to either could apply ;  
 So would a lamb stand that should chance to stray  
 'Twixt two fierce wolves that each caused equal 5  
 fear ;  
 So would a dog between two does at bay.  
 Wherefore my silence, as bewildered there  
 I stood in doubt's suspense, I do not blame,  
 Since "needs must" ruled it so, and praise I spare.  
 Silent I stood, but my desire became 10  
 In my looks painted, and thus my request  
 More fervent was than clearest speech could frame.

<sup>122</sup> The form sinks, it will be remembered, as in a "sea of light," in the lustre of the "eternal pearl." Dante gazed on the vanishing form for a moment, but Beatrice was more to him than Piccarda or Constance, and he turned to her.

<sup>1</sup> The proverb of "the ass between two bundles of hay" had its parallel in the teaching of Aquinas, who presents the problem of the position of the will with an absolute equilibrium of motives, as in the case here put, being logically or absolutely insoluble (*Summ.* i 2. 13, 61). So, Dante says, it

And Beatrice did as, at the hest  
 Of Nabuchodonosor, Daniel,  
 Taming the rage that filled the tyrant's breast ; 15  
 And said : " I see how draweth thee the spell  
 Now of this wish, now that, and so thy pain  
 Is smothered, and thy care thou canst not tell.  
 Thou arguest, ' If good-will yet remain,  
 On what ground can another's violence 20  
 Make less the measure of my merit's gain ? '  
 Also thou findest cause for doubting hence,  
 That spirits seem unto the stars to go,  
 As Plato's judgment deemed the soundest sense.  
 These are the questions which thou seek'st to know 25  
 In equal measure, therefore first will I  
 Treat of the one that doth most venom show.  
 The Seraph who most dwells in Deity,  
 Moses and Samuel, and the blest St. John—  
 Take which thou wilt, and pass not Mary by— 30  
 Have in no other sphere of Heaven their throne  
 Than those same spirits that thou look'st on here,  
 Nor years or more or less hath any one :  
 But all make beautiful the primal sphere,  
 And have their joyous life in varied guise, 35  
 As more or less the Breath eterne is there.

was with his two doubts. They vexed him equally, and so he held his peace and uttered neither.

<sup>13</sup> See *Dan.* ii. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar both his dream and its interpretation. Beatrice tells Dante his doubts and their solution. And the doubts are on one side moral, on the other physical. (1) If the vow of chastity was broken involuntarily, why did it involve any loss of blessedness? (2) Was the doctrine of Plato (*Tim.* p. 41, g), that the souls of men came from the stars and returned to their several spheres, true, as the appearance of Piccarda and others in the moon seemed to indicate?

<sup>23</sup> The second question is discussed first, as the more perilous. The Platonic thought, to which Dante may have been led through *Georg.* iv. 221-228, tended on the one hand to Pantheism, and on the other to localised and separate heavens, at variance with the Church's teaching as to the blessedness of the saints, and with Dante's own belief as to the Empyrean.

<sup>28</sup> The explanation given is that the souls of the highest Seraphim, of all Saints, of the Virgin Mother, are in the Empyrean Heaven, the abode of God, and that Piccarda and Constance are there also, though they and the souls in other spheres manifest themselves, according to their several merits

Here they appeared, not that in this sphere lies  
 The lot assigned them, but in token true  
 Of life celestial which doth lowest rise.  
 This speech to thy mind bears proportion due, 40  
 Since through the senses it doth apprehend  
 What then is meet for intellect to view.  
 Wherefore the Scripture thus doth condescend  
 Unto your weakness, and both hands and feet  
 Assigns to God, yet doth not so intend ; 45  
 And Holy Church in human figure meet  
 Gabriel and Michael to you doth present,  
 And him who made Tobias' cure complete.  
 That which Timæus states in argument  
 Is no wise like to that thou saw'st of late, 50  
 Since what he says, 'twould seem, is his intent.  
 He saith that for each soul its star doth wait,  
 Deeming that it from that clime hither fell,  
 When Nature gave it as a form innate.  
 And yet, perchance, his words a meaning tell 55  
 Beyond their sound, and so the thought may be  
 Not such as men may laugh and mock at well.  
 If he but means in these same orbs to see  
 The honour of their influence, or their blame,  
 Perchance his bow hath hit some verity. 60

as those named have done in that of the Moon, which is the lowest of all. The interpretation which sees in l. 30 an exception in the Virgin's favour is at variance with Dante's central thought as well as with Catholic theology.

<sup>40</sup> What Dante had seen was therefore an accommodation to human infirmity, like that which is seen in the anthropomorphic language of the Bible and the artistic representations (was he thinking of Cimabue and Giotto?) of Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael (*Tob.* iii. 17, v. 4, 6, 21).

<sup>49</sup> Dante may have known the *Timæus* through the Latin translation and commentary of Chalcidius, which was well known in the thirteenth century (*Witte*), or from Cicero's treatise of the same name. Comp. Aquin. *c. Gentes*, ii. 47, 48; *Conv.* iv. 21.

<sup>55</sup> The habit of finding manifold meanings passed naturally from Scripture to other books, and Dante apologetically suggests that Plato may have meant only to refer to the stellar influences, in which Dante recognised the determining elements, not of man's will, but of his qualities and tendencies. The words of Plato (*Tim.* p. 40 d.), if Dante had read them, would have suggested such a thought (*Butl.*).

Ill understood, this doctrine was the same  
 As that which well-nigh drew the world, or Jove  
 Or Mars or Mercury as gods to name.  
 The other doubt which doth thy spirit move  
 Hath less of poison, since no evil lust 65  
 Therefrom could lead thy steps from me to rove.  
 That this our Justice should appear unjust  
 In mortal eyes is but an argument,  
 Not for vile heresy, but faith and trust.  
 But since to this truth and its high intent 70  
 Thy understanding well may penetrate,  
 I, as thou seekest, will thy soul content.  
 If 'tis constraint when he who bears his fate  
 No wise allows what twists his deeds awry,  
 Then doth it not these spirits liberate : 75  
 For will, unless it wills, can never die,  
 But works as Nature worketh in the fire,  
 Though force a thousand times to twist it try.  
 If more or less it yieldeth to desire,  
 It seconds the constraint; and thus did they, 80  
 Being able to the cloister to retire.

<sup>63</sup> The readings vary, "*nominar*" in the sense of invoking, *numerar* = to reckon, and *numinar* = to deify. The common adjectives "jovial," "mercurial," "martial," bear witness to what was an almost universal belief. Butler compares Augustine's "*nominibus nuncupaverunt*" (*C. D.* vii. 15).

<sup>64</sup> The other doubt is treated as one which did not involve a departure from a true theology. If there was a seeming injustice in the divine government, with which Beatrice, as the symbol of Wisdom, identifies herself (*Prov.* viii.), that ought to strengthen, not to weaken, faith; for that, when the finite contemplates the infinite, is precisely what analogy would lead us to expect, and the very doubt in a single instance implies faith in the general justice of God, and not the pravity of the heretic. This seems, on the whole, the best explanation, though it must be admitted that it applies the word "argument" in two slightly different senses. The subjective meaning "evidence of faith" would be tenable enough in itself, but then one does not see why the doubt should be said to have any element of evil in it. Comp. Aquin. *c. Gent. Proem.* c. 9; Anselm, *De Incarn.* c. 11; *Cur Deus*, i. 2.

<sup>73</sup> The solution of the difficulty is an echo of Aquinas (*Summ.* P. ii. 2, 85, 1). In the constraint which excuses altogether there is no co-operation of the will. Piccarda and those like her had consented, though against their will. They had not, like martyrs, "resisted unto blood." Nothing constrains fire to tend downward; nothing should so constrain the soul. Those

If then their will had trod the perfect way,  
 As Laurence did, upon the hot bars laid,  
 Or Mucius, stern to make his hand obey,  
 Back on that road it would have them conveyed 85  
 Whence they were dragged, as soon as they were  
 free :

But all too rare is will so firmly stayed.  
 And by these words, if they are stored by thee,  
 As thou should'st store them, is the objection met  
 Which else would oft have caused perplexity. 90

But now another passage hard is set  
 Before thine eyes, whence of thyself alone,  
 Thou could'st not 'scape ere thou should'st weary get.  
 I, as a certain truth, to thee have shown  
 That blessed spirits know not how to lie, 95  
 Since to the First Truth they are nearer grown ;

And so Piccarda this might certify,  
 That Constance kept her fondness for the veil,  
 Seeming to speak another thing than I.

And often, brother mine—so runs the tale— 100  
 We, to flee danger, 'gainst our better will,  
 Do that which makes us from our duty fail,

E'en as Alcmæon did his mother kill,  
 Obedient to his father's urgent prayer,  
 And in his impious deed was pious still. 105

And at this point I wish thee to compare  
 How force with will doth blend itself, and make  
 The sin to be of all excuses bare.

who had been torn from convents might have returned to them when they had an opportunity.

<sup>82</sup> The story of St. Laurence and his martyrdom on his fiery bed of steel and that of Mucius Scævola (to which Dante refers also in *Conv.* iv. 5 ; *Mon.* ii. 5) are examples of the will that does not yield one jot or tittle.

<sup>97</sup> Yet another difficulty. Piccarda had said that Constance never ceased to love her life as nun. How could that be true when she did not return to it ?

<sup>101</sup> Another casuistic distinction solves the problem. Men will to act against their will, *i.e.*, against their inclination, to avoid a danger. When they so act against conscience they cannot plead constraint.

<sup>103</sup> For the story of Alcmæon, see *H.* xx. 34 *n.* ; *Purg.* xii. 50 *n.* The

Absolute will consents not law to break ;  
 But it consents, so far as it feels fear, 110  
 If it refrain, for greater danger's sake.  
 So when Piccarda's utterance met thine ear,  
 She spoke of that will absolute, and I  
 Of the other ; so we both the truth speak here."  
 With such calm course the holy stream flowed by, 115  
 Which sprang from fount whence flows each truth  
 divine,  
 And both my cravings thus did satisfy.  
 "O loved of Love supreme, O goddess mine,"  
 I said, approaching, "whose words o'er me flow,  
 And to a warmer, fuller life incline ; 120  
 Not all my feeling to such depth can go  
 As to requite thee fully, grace for grace :  
 Let Him do that who all doth see and know.  
 I see that nought can fill the mind's vast space,  
 Unless Truth's light dwell there as denizen, 125  
 Beyond which nothing true can find a place.  
 In that it rests, like wild best in its den,  
 When it attains it ; and it can attain,  
 Else frustrate would be all desires of men.

antithesis in l. 105 reminds us of *H.* xx. 28 ; both being echoes of *Met.* ix. 408 : "*Facto pius et sceleratus eodem.*"

113 The "absolute will" —will not constrained—of Constance was or the convent life ; her mixed will, consenting to fear as well as force, led her to remain an Empress. Here again we have Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 2, 6, 6). Comp. throughout the discussion, Hooker, *E. P.* i. 7.

116 Beatrice is the river ; God the source of truth, from which the river flows.

118 The words rise almost to the level of an apotheosis ; but Beatrice, we must remember, has become the representation of Divine Wisdom, and the language has its parallel in that of Hooker (*E. P.* i. *ad fin.*) when he says of Law that "her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world ;" that "all things do her homage as the mother of their peace and joy."

127 The comparison has its parallel in *Ps.* xlii. 1. The "hart desiring the water-brooks" is a parable of the soul's thirst for God ; the rest of the hart in its lair, free from danger, sets forth the peace of the intellect when it rests, after its restless wanderings, vexed and driven by the dogs of doubt, in the possession of assured truth.

129 *Mediæva* thought assumed that the existence of a desire implied that of the desired object. Starting from the belief in a creative Will, wise.



And thence springs, like a scion, doubt again 130  
 Hard by Truth's stem, and such is Nature's law,  
 Which, height on height, leads upward from the  
 plain.

This gives assurance, this my mind doth draw  
 With reverence, Lady, yet to ask of thee  
 Of other truth which as obscure I saw. 135

I wish to know if man, for vows that he  
 Breaks, may with other good deeds satisfy,  
 That in your scales they not too light may be."

And Beatrice looked on me with eye 140  
 So full of glow of love and so divine,  
 That, my strength failing, then my back turned I,  
 And, almost fainting, did mine eyes incline.

mighty, loving, it would not admit that God had given men desires only that they might be frustrated. "Man seeks for truth, therefore truth is to be found," seemed to them to be a natural, almost an axiomatic, inference (*Summ.* i. 12).

<sup>130</sup> The thought is that of one who had known the doubts from which even the thirteenth century was not exempt. To him those doubts are not like the canker that eats into the heart of the tree, or the ivy which sucks out its vigour. They, the kind of doubts of which we have here a sample, were the suckers that proved the tree's vitality, though they needed to be pruned.

<sup>136</sup> One such question meets us, that of the commutation of vows (*Lev.* xxvii.), and the general principle of the obligation of promises seemed against it. Yet the Church claimed the power to dispense from vows, and this included the right to commute. Was either act legitimate, and if so, on what conditions?

<sup>141</sup> A difference of reading "*diedi*" or "*diede*," and of punctuation, gives two alternative renderings—

"My strength being overpowered, fled away, '

or

"I, my strength overpowered, turned away from her."

Italian commentators gravely discuss whether the act thus described would have been that of a gentleman.

*The Doctrine of Dispensations — The Second Heaven, of  
Mercury—The Love of Fame*

"If I so glowing seem in heat of love,  
 Beyond the fashion that on earth is known,  
 So that too much for thine eyes' strength I prove,  
 Marvel thou not; from perfect sight alone  
 Doth this proceed, which, as it sees aright, 5  
 To the good seen still moves its footsteps on.  
 Well I perceive how that Eternal Light  
 Already shines on thine intelligence,  
 Which, when 'tis seen, makes love's flame ever bright;  
 And if aught else thy love seduces thence, 10  
 'Tis nothing but its vestige which is tracked,  
 Ill understood, that penetrates the sense.  
 Thou seek'st to know if thou canst give in act  
 For broken vow some service, which, when paid,  
 Should keep the soul from claim of law intact." 15  
 So Beatrice this Canto's opening made,  
 And, as a man who tells his tale apace,  
 Her holy argument full open laid.  
 "The greatest gift that God of His free grace  
 Gave at creation, and most near in kind 20  
 To His own goodness, foremost in the race

<sup>1</sup> The visible beauty of Beatrice had even in the *V. N.* c. 21, 26, overwhelmed the pilgrim, as in the last lines of *C. iv.*, and been as a foretaste of Paradise. He cannot separate that beauty from the most spiritual conception of Paradise, that it is the joy of finding intellectual truth. In *Conv.* iii. 15 we have poetry turned into prose, and the dissolving views stereotyped in the formula that Philosophy is a "fair lady," and that her eyes are "demonstrations." What he now hears is that the beauty which so enchants him grows, and will grow, brighter as they advance to higher regions of contemplation. The "perfect vision" is that with which Beatrice sees truth. Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 60, 2) and Aristotle (*E. N.* ix. 12) are again paraphrased. The lovers of physical beauty find their chief joy in gazing on it; so the spiritual beauty of truth presents in varying degrees the vision which is joy.

<sup>10</sup> The doubts or errors which are in the mind of the seeker after truth do not spring from the pravity of will, which is the essence of heresy (*C. iv.* 65), but from the imperfect apprehension of partial truth, which leads it to take the part for the whole. There is a truth, that is, underlying the error (*Summ.* i. 60, 2).

<sup>19</sup> The discussion begins by postulating freedom of will as the highest gift

For praise, is freedom of the will and mind,  
 Which to all living things intelligent,  
 And those alone, hath been and is assigned.  
 Now thou wilt see in this high argument 25  
 How high the worth of vows, if made but so  
 That God consenteth unto thy consent;  
 For in this bond 'twixt God and man we show  
 We of this treasure make a sacrifice,  
 Such as I tell; its own act bids it go. 30  
 What then can come as compensating price?  
 Think'st thou to use well things thus consecrate,  
 'Twere to do good with wealth obtained by vice.  
 Now art thou certain of that problem great:  
 But since the Church doth oft dispense with it,— 35  
 Which seems against the truth I showed of late,—  
 'Tis meet that thou awhile at table sit,  
 Because the strong meat thou hast ta'en doth call  
 For aid, thy stomach's feeble power to fit.  
 Open thy mind to that which I let fall, 40  
 And fix it there, for knowledge is not found  
 In having heard, without retaining all.  
 Two things there are as with the essence bound  
 Of that same sacrifice; the one is that  
 Of which 'tis made, and one the compact's ground. 45

bestowed on intellectual creatures, men and angels, and on them alone. In making a vow, man, fettering his freedom by a self-imposed restraint, offers to God the highest sacrifice within his reach. To employ what has been thus consecrated even for pious uses is to rob God in order to give alms. This appears self-evident, but then comes in the Church's power of dispensation, which seems to set aside that axiom.

<sup>37</sup> We note the recurrence of the leading thought of *Conv.* i. 1, that truth is the "angels' food," which the teacher offers to his scholars. *Comp.* *1 Cor.* ii. 14; *Heb.* v. 14.

<sup>43</sup> The solution of the problem begins with a *distinguo*. The vow includes two elements, the material thing promised and the surrender of will. The latter cannot be dispensed with, the former may be commuted. Dante shows himself a more rigorous, or at least a more exact, casuist than Aquinas, who allows entire dispensation for the sake of a greater good (*Summ.* P. ii. 2, 88). So if an Israelite made a vow, he was bound, as a rule, to perform his vow in the letter, the exception being that the first-born of man might be redeemed, *i.e.*, commuted for, by the first-born of beast (*Lev.* xxvii. 9, 10, 28-33).

This last is never cancelled save by what  
     Fulfil it, and of this enough I said,  
     In words that pointed specially thereat.  
 So on the Hebrews it was binding made  
     To offer, though the things they offered might 50  
     Be changed, and this should in thy mind be weighed.  
 The other, which as matter meets thy sight,  
     May well be such that promise doth not fail,  
     If it for somewhat else be changed aright.  
 But no one may to shift the load prevail 55  
     By his own choice, unless the keys shall turn,  
     One golden and the other silver pale;  
 And every change to count as foolish learn,  
     Unless the old in that which takes its place  
     As four in six included thou discern. 60  
 Therefore, whatever hath such weight of grace  
     That it doth every counterpoise outweigh,  
     No other spending ever can replace.  
 Let mortals then no vows in jesting say:  
     Be faithful, nor to act so rashly stirred, 65  
     As Jephthah was his 'first chance' vow to pay,  
 Who more becomingly had said, 'I've erred,'  
     Than to do worse in bondage to such ties.  
     Nor less the blame the Greeks' great duke incurred,  
 Whence wept Iphigenia her fair eyes, 70  
     And made tears flow alike from fool and sage,  
     When they heard tell of such a sacrifice.

<sup>55</sup> The keys, as in *Purg.* ix. 117, are the symbols of Church wisdom and authority, without which no man may venture on the commutation to which interest or pleasure may tempt him. And to guard against the temptation the further rule is laid down that the substituted gift must be half as much again in value as the original. The law of *Lev.* xxvii. prescribed one-fifth in the addition.

<sup>61</sup> The general principle excludes commutation in the case of vows of chastity, and *a fortiori* dispensation. Nothing can take the place of the sacrifice which the vow implies. So *Summ.* ii. 2, 78, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Dante follows Aquinas (1) in assuming that Jephthah slew his daughter; (2) in condemning the act (*Summ.* ii. 2. 88, 2). The parallel of Iphigenia may have been read either in *Æn.* ii. 116 or *Boeth.* iv. 7. There is no trace of his having known Lucretius (i. 85).

O Christians! with less haste yourselves engage;  
 Be not like feather blown by every wind,  
 Nor think all streams can cleanse guilt's heritage. 75  
 Ye have the Scriptures Old and New in mind,  
 The Pastor of the Church to be your guide;  
 Enough for your salvation there ye'll find.  
 If evil lust aught else to you hath cried,  
 Be ye as men, and not like silly beasts, 80  
 Lest e'en the Jews among you you deride.  
 Be not like lamb that leaves its mother's breasts,  
 And, in its wanton and unwise delight,  
 At its own pleasure, with itself contests."  
 So Beatrice spake, and so I write, 85  
 And then again she turned with yearning keen,  
 There where the world shows most of life and light.  
 Her silence, and the change in look and mien,  
 Restraint to my desire administ'red,  
 Which still new questions in advance had seen; 90

73 The counsels of Wisdom take a wider range, and lay down the position that Scripture interpreted by the Church is the Christian's *regula fidei*. Line 75 seems like an echo of "one baptism for the remission of sins."

80 An echo from *Ps.* xxxii. 9; 2 *Pet.* ii. 12. Had Dante come in contact with Jews, Immanuel of Rome, or others, who sneered at the indulgent laxity with which Christians observed their vows?

87 (1) The East; (2) the Sun seen on the Equator; (3) the Empyrean Heaven, have all found advocates. I incline to (1). The whole discussion, which thus ends, seems to us at first to belong to the dreariest regions of casuistry, with no element either of life or poetry. But what if between the lines we were to find an element of personality as intense and living as that which meets us in *Purg.* xxxi. xxxii., of principles as important as those underlying the discussions of C. ii.? What if Dante found in his own life a parallel to that of Piccarda? What if, behind the memory of Beatrice and the cord of the Tertiary Order, not in itself binding to celibacy, there had been an inward purpose, half-formulated into a vow, of which the celibate life would have been the natural outcome, and his friends had pressed marriage upon him, marriage with a Donati, as Corso Donati had pressed it on Piccarda? They had urged the pleas of health, wealth, worldly prosperity, and he had yielded, without "the gold or silver key," without consulting his spiritual director, to his own great loss. He had consented against his will, and what his friends had thought would be a safeguard against sensual temptation proved to be no safeguard at all, rather in the absence of any true ideal of marriage even partially realised, left him more exposed to it. This, at least, is what I find in the discussion. If it is only a hypothesis, it has at least the merit of including all phenomena, explaining what has hitherto been left unexplained.

And as an arrow hits, ere yet hath fled  
 The bow-string's trembling, that whereto 'twas  
     sent,  
 So to the Second Realm our way we sped.  
 And there my Lady saw I so content,  
 As she within that light of Heaven passed on, 95  
 That brighter glory she the planet lent.  
 And if the star, thus changed, in smiling shone,  
 What should I do, of nature frail the heir,  
 Who in all ways as changeable am known?  
 As, in a fishpond which is calm and clear, 100  
 The fishes draw to what may on it light,  
 In way that shows they count on new food there,  
 So I saw more than thousand splendours bright  
 Draw nigh towards us, and from each was heard,  
 "Lo! this is she who shall increase Love's  
     might." 105

And as each one of them our presence neared,  
 The shade was seen as full of blessedness,  
 By the clear light that streaming forth appeared.  
 Bethink thee, Reader, how it would distress  
 Thy mind, how eager thou would'st be to know, 110  
 If the tale thus begun should not progress;  
 And thou wilt see within thyself that so  
 I sought to hear them tell me of their state,  
 As to mine eyes their forms themselves did show.

<sup>92</sup> In a moment, as in a world beyond human measurement, the travellers pass from the sphere of the moon to that of Mercury. And Beatrice grows brighter, and so does the planet, and so does Dante himself.

<sup>99</sup> We note the curious self-analysis of the line which describes the true poetic temperament.

<sup>100</sup> It would be worth while to find out when gold and silver fish (*Cyprinus auratus*) were first introduced into the fish-ponds of Italy. If Dante had seen them in their brightness, they might well seem to him a parable of the heavenly splendours, almost like the "topazes" and "rubies" of C. xxx. 66, 76. They are said to have been introduced into England in 1691, but I do not know when they first found their way from China to Europe.

<sup>105</sup> The line expresses the idea of the Communion of Saints. As the angels rejoice "over one sinner that repenteth" (*Luke* xv. 10), so the spirits of the blest over one (we note that the verb is in the singular) who comes a fresh object of their love. They seek therefore to know who and what

"O born to good, to whom the favour great 115  
 Is given to see the eternal Triumph's throne,  
 Ere thou thy warfare's close canst celebrate,  
 We by the light that o'er all Heaven is thrown  
 Are kindled, wherefore if 'tis thy desire  
 To know us, all shall at thy will be shown." 120  
 Such words from lips of one of that blest choir  
 I heard, and "Speak, speak," Beatricè said;  
 "Trust them as gods; let nothing doubt inspire."  
 "I see full well how thou a nest hast made  
 In thine own light, and draw'st it from thine 125  
 eyes,  
 For lo! they flashed as thy smiles on me played;  
 But thee I know not, nor why for thee lies,  
 O worthiest soul, thy home within the sphere,  
 Veiled from men's eyes by rays that elsewhere  
 rise."  
 So spake I straight towards that radiance clear 130  
 Who first had spoken, and so it became  
 More lucid than at first it did appear:  
 And like the sun, that in excess of flame  
 Hides himself, when the heat hath scatterèd  
 The vapours dense that did his glory maim, 135  
 So in their joy o'er-great had vanishèd  
 In their own light those holy lineaments;  
 And hidden, hidden, thus the answer said,  
 Which the next Canto in its song presents.

manner of man the new comer is. Dante, in his turn, and in the same spirit, seeks to know who has thus spoken to him.

<sup>123</sup> The phrase explains the use of "goddess" in C. iv. 118. Was *John* x. 34, 35, in Dante's thoughts.

<sup>129</sup> Mercury, as nearest to the sun, is for the most part invisible.

<sup>133</sup> We are reminded of Milton's "dark with excess of light." The figure of the speaker withdraws into a veil of greater brightness.

*Justinian—The Flight of the Roman Eagle—The Pilgrim  
Romeo*

"WHEN Constantine had turned the eagle's flight,  
 Against Heaven's order, heretofore obeyed,  
 Following Lavinia's old heroic knight,  
 That bird of God two hundred years had made,  
 And more, in Europe's furthest coast its nest, 5  
 Near to the hills where first it left the shade;  
 And 'neath the shadow of its wide wings blest,  
 From hand to hand the world's dominion ran,  
 And changing thus, at last with me did rest.  
 Cæsar I was, and am Justinian, 10  
 Who, feeling will of primal Love, was bent  
 To make laws free from vain and cumbrous plan.  
 And ere I was upon that work intent,  
 In Christ one nature only, and no more,  
 I held, and was with that my faith content. 15  
 But the blest Agapêtus, he who bore  
 The office of chief shepherd, to my view  
 Brought by his words the true faith's better lore.

<sup>1</sup> It is not without a sense of relief that we pass from the physical and moral problems of C. ii.-v. to the splendid epitome of Roman history with which the Canto opens. The speaker (l. 10) is Justinian.

<sup>2</sup> The progress of empire had been from East to West. Constantine turned it back towards its source.

<sup>3</sup> The "ancient" hero is of course Æneas, as the founder of the Roman power (*Mon.* ii. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Two hundred years are reckoned from Constantine (326) to Justinian (527). The borderland of Europe is Constantinople, near the plain of Troy, from which Æneas had started.

<sup>12</sup> The great task was that of consolidating the confused mass of edicts and opinions into a great code. The words are almost a quotation from the Emperor's Preface to the *Institutes*: "*Opus desperatum celesti favore jam adimplevimus*" (*Butl.*). The chaff was sifted from the wheat, and the result was found in the Codex, the Pandects, and the Novellæ which bear Justinian's name.

<sup>13</sup> Strictly speaking, it was the Empress Theodora who was jealous for the Eutychian or Monophysite dogma, Justinian only so far as he was under her influence. She had insisted on the appointment of the Monophysite Anthimus as Patriarch of Constantinople, and when Agapetus, Bishop of Rome, arrived there, the Emperor insisted on the Pope's communicating with him. He rebuked the Emperor for his Eutychian leanings, obtained his signature to an orthodox confession, and succeeded in obtaining the



Him I believed, and now, with judgment new,  
 Discern what he then taught, as thou canst see, 20  
 In contradiction marshalled, false and true.  
 Soon as my steps did with the Church agree,  
 It was God's will through grace my mind to thrust  
 To my high task, and this was all to me.  
 To Belisarius I the arms did trust, 25  
 With whom was joined such aid from hand of Heaven  
 That it was token that my rest was just.  
 To thy first question thus is answer given ;  
 But now, such is that very question's state,  
 That I to touch on other grounds am driven. 30  
 That thou may'st see with argument of weight  
 How men contend against the sacred sign,  
 Who or oppose it or appropriate,  
 See thou what virtue great hath made it shine, 35  
 Worthy of homage ; and I there begin  
 When Pallas died to found its kingly line.  
 Thou know'st how it in Alba home did win,  
 And there for more than centuries three abode,  
 Till champions three met three in conflict's din.

deposition of Anthimus. The story is told fully in Paul Diac. xvii., but Dante may have learnt it from Latini's *Trésor*, ii. 25.

<sup>21</sup> The first axiom of dialectic was that of two contradictory propositions one must be true and the other false. The dogma of the two natures in one person now seemed to Justinian as axiomatic. The symbolism of the Gryphon indicates the stress which Dante himself laid on the dogma (*Purg.* xxix. 108). Comp. also C. xxxiii. 130.

<sup>22</sup> As a matter of history, the work of codifying was begun before the visit of Agapetus.

<sup>25</sup> The victories of Belisarius were accepted as a sign that the Emperor need not lead his armies himself, but might give himself to the arts of peace. Did Dante know of the way in which Belisarius was rewarded? Probably not. Villani (ii. 6) tells the story as if he had continued in the Emperor's favour till his death.

<sup>31</sup> The lines that follow sum up the argument of the *De Monarchiâ*. The eagle was the sacred symbol of the ideal Empire. Ghibellines who used it for their selfish ends, and Guelphs who opposed it, were alike impious (l. 103). The footsteps of the Divine order are traced in its history. (Comp *Mon.* ii. 10; *Conv.* iv. 5.)

<sup>36</sup> Pallas, the son of Evander, king of Latium, died as the ally of Æneas, fighting against Turnus (*Æn.* viii.-x.). Æneas, from Dante's standpoint, became his heir.

<sup>37</sup> The received dates give 1184 B.C. for capture of Troy, 753 for foundation

Thou know'st how 'twas on those seven kings  
 bestowed, 40  
 From Sabine rape to chaste Lucretia's pain,  
 While it o'er neighbouring nations conquering strode.  
 Thou know'st what great achievements it did gain,  
 By Romans famed 'gainst Brennus, Pyrrhus borne,  
 And other chieftains in confederate train. 45  
 And then Torquatus, Quinctius, named in scorn  
 From locks unkempt, the Decii, Fabii too,  
 Won fame to which my myrrh I gladly burn.  
 It did the pride of Arabs fierce subdue,  
 Who crossed, behind the steps of Hannibal, 50  
 The Alps, whence thou, O Po, dost glide to view.  
 Young heroes to their triumph did it call,  
 Scipio and Pompey, and on that same hill  
 Where thou wast born, full fiercely did it fall.  
 Then at the time wherein all Heaven's high will 55  
 Would bring the world beneath its law serene,  
 At Rome's behest 'twas borne by Cæsar's skill:

of Rome. Line 39 refers to the combat of the Horatii and Curiatii (*Liv.* i. 24), which resulted in the transfer of power from Alba Longa to Rome. The rape of the Sabine women and that of Lucretia are taken as the limits of the period of the kings during which Rome was extending her conquests.

<sup>43</sup> The next salient points are (1) the capture of Rome by the Gauls, followed by their defeat by Camillus, B.C. 389 (*Conv.* iv. 5); (2) the defeat of Pyrrhus (B.C. 275), whom we have met in *H.* xii. 135. Then, selecting the chief heroes, he names T. Manlius, Quinctius Cincinnatus (we note that he explains the name), the Decii, who fought against the Samnites, the great Fabian house which found its chief representatives in Maximus and the "*Cunctator*."

<sup>49</sup> Commentators have perplexed themselves as to why Dante spoke of the Carthaginians as Arabs, but it was quite after his manner to use modern names for the ancient inhabitants of the same region. So Virgil is a Lombard (*H.* i. 68) and the Gauls are "Franceschi" (*Conv.* iv. 5). The people of North Africa were Arabs in the thirteenth century, and that was enough.

<sup>52</sup> Scipio seems to have been a special hero of Dante's. So in *Conv.* iv. 5 he appears as "*quello benedetto giovane*." The "hill" is Fiesole, which was said to have been destroyed by Cnæus Pompeius, and again by Julius Cæsar (*Vill.* i. 36, 37).

<sup>55</sup> The peace which was wrought by the victories of Cæsar and Augustus, and of which the closing of the Temple of Janus at the time of the birth of Christ (l. 81) was the outward token, was a favourite topic with Dante, as indicating the Divine purpose working in history (*Conv.* iv. 5; *Mon.* i. 16).

And what it did from Varo to the Rhene,  
 By Isar, Arar, Seine, and every vale  
 That pays its tribute to the Rhone, was seen. 60  
 But what it did when, mighty to prevail,  
 It left Ravenna, leapt the Rubicon,  
 Nor tongue nor pen could tell the wondrous tale.  
 Then towards Spain it wheeled its legions on ;  
 Then towards Durazzo, and Pharsalia smote, 65  
 So that hot Nile felt sharp pangs through it run.  
 Antandros then and Simois remote,  
 Its birthplace, it resaw, where Hector lay ;  
 Thence with ill speed for Ptolemy did float,  
 And so to Juba flashing made its way ; 70  
 And then it wheeled itself towards your west,  
 Where Pompey's clarion notes were heard to play.  
 For what he wrought, next bearer of its crest,  
 Brutus and Cassius howl in nether Hell ;  
 Perugia, Modena, sorely it distrest. 75

58-60 The Var, a river on the west of Nice, is named as the boundary between Gallia Transalpina and Cisalpina ; Isara = the Isère, which flows into the Rhone at Valence ; Era = Saône, falling into the same river at Lyons ; Senna = Seine. The description finds a parallel in *Luc.* i. 399-446. "Rhene" finds a precedent in Milton, *P. L.*, i. 352.

61 Cæsar halted at Ravenna before he crossed the Rubicon (*Suet. Jul. C.* 30), and Dante, who had probably been staying at Ravenna (comp. *Purg.* xxviii. 20) before he wrote this Canto, naturally dwelt on the ancient glories of the city.

64 Cæsar, and not Pompeius, is recognised as the true champion of the Roman eagle. The lines epitomise his conquests over Pompeius' legates in Spain, the siege of Durazzo (= Dyrrachium = Epidamnus) by the Pompeian forces, the great victory of Pharsalia. Here again Dante follows Lucan (vii, viii.). The readings in l. 66 vary *at* and *it*. The general meaning is clear enough. The effects of the victory of Pharsalia were felt even on the banks of the Nile, where Pompeius was slain by Ptolemy (*Luc.* viii.).

67 After Pharsalia Cæsar led his troops to Antandros, a city in Phrygia to Simois, the famed river of Troy, and so the eagle once more saw the nest from which it had flown, the cradle of the Roman people, the tomb of Hector (*Æn.* i. 99, v. 371). Hence the Dictator led his forces to the conquest of Egypt ; then against Juba, king of Numidia, who had all along been a strong Pompeian ; then finally to Spain, where the war ended by the defeat of Labienus and the sons of Pompeius.

73 The "next standard-bearer" is Augustus. It is characteristic that the crime for which Brutus and Cassius are in Hell (*H.* xxxiv. 65-67) is not so much the murder of Julius as their resistance to his successor as the divinely appointed Emperor.

75 Augustus defeated Marcus Antonius near Modena, and afterwards besieged Perugia, where Lucius Antonius had taken refuge with Fulvia.

Still Cleopatra's tears of anguish well,  
 Whom, fleeing from it, by the serpent's bite  
 A death dark, sudden, terrible befell.  
 To the Red Sea with him it winged its flight;  
 With him the world it settled in such peace 80  
 That Janus' temple closed its gates of might.  
 But what the sign, of which to tell doth please,  
 Had done before and was about to do  
 For the world's kingdom, ruled by its decrees,  
 Scant and obscure becomes to outward view, 85  
 When the third Cæsar's hands the sceptre swayed,  
 If eye be clear and our affection true.  
 For then the living Justice, which hath made  
 Me wise, gave it, through him of whom I speak,  
 The boast of vengeance to His anger paid. 90  
 At my rejoinder marvel now, and seek :—  
 Later it sped with Titus, vengeance right  
 Upon that vengeance of old sin to wreak.  
 And when the Lombard tooth began to bite  
 The Holy Church, beneath its sheltering wing 95  
 Came Charlemagne to help with conquering might.

<sup>76</sup> The battle of Actium is not named, but is implied in the death of Cleopatra, which followed on it. For the "Red Sea" comp. *Æn.* viii. 686.

<sup>82</sup> All earthly conquests, however, fell into insignificance as compared with the great glory given to the Empire under Tiberius, as the third Cæsar. The Christ had been born under Augustus, but it was given to his successor that the great redemption should be wrought out in his time, and through the instrumentality of the Empire (*Mon.* i. 13). The death of Christ satisfied the righteous wrath of God, and that death was the act of a Roman governor. For that act Dante, however, clearly held that the Jews, and not Pilate, were responsible, and so Titus in his turn had the glory of being a minister of the Divine vengeance.

<sup>91</sup> Butler ingeniously suggests that the term "reply" is used in its technical sense as the answer of the plaintiff in a suit to the "exceptions" taken by the defendant.

<sup>94</sup> The sketch passes rapidly over the decline and fall of the first Empire to its revival under Charlemagne, in which Dante saw the Divine sanction given to the perpetuity of the Empire, and then passes to an impartial condemnation of the factions by which Italy was in his own time divided. The idealist has formed a party by himself (comp. l. 33; C. xvii. 69), and condemns alike those who bore the yellow *fleur-de-lys* of France, borne by the house of Anjou at Naples (Charles II. was king in 1300), as the head of the Guelphs, and the Ghibellines who turned the sacred eagle into a badge

Now canst thou judge what wrong and woe they bring  
 Whom I but now to thee as guilty named,  
 And see how from them all your mischiefs spring?  
 These 'gainst the public standard have proclaimed <sup>100</sup>  
 The golden lilies: those make it their own;  
 Uncertain is it who should most be blamed.  
 Let then the Ghibellines make known, make known,  
 Their arts 'neath other standard; this is slow  
 To join with those who justice will dethrone. <sup>105</sup>  
 And let not this new Charles aim at it blow,  
 With those his Guelphs, but hold those claws in  
 fear  
 Which of its hide stripped nobler lion-foe.  
 Full oft have children shed a bitter tear  
 For sins of sires, and never let men deem <sup>110</sup>  
 That God those lilies for His arms shall bear.  
 This star, though small, as well-adorned doth beam,  
 Through spirits good that have been seen in act,  
 That men may them as great and good esteem.  
 And when desires have settled in that tract, <sup>115</sup>  
 And from the true path turn aside, the ray  
 Of true Love needs must show less life in act.  
 But in the due proportion of our pay  
 To merits is large measure of our joy,  
 Since nor o'er-prized nor under-paid are they. <sup>120</sup>

of faction. We note the agreement of tone with Henry VII.'s proclamation on entering Italy (i. p. ci.).

<sup>106</sup> The "new Charles" has been identified by Witte as possibly Charles of Valois, but at the assumed date of the vision he had not appeared in Italy, and when Dante wrote the *Paradiso* had vanished from the scene. I adhere, therefore, with most commentators, in applying the words to Charles II. of Naples, who was king in 1300, though the warning was probably meant for his successor, Robert, who succeeded to the throne in 1309.

<sup>108</sup> The words may refer to any of the kings who had been conquered by the Roman eagle, Pyrrhus, Jugurtha, Ptolemy, and the like.

<sup>112</sup> With this warning the history ends, and Justinian proceeds to tell how Mercury, the smallest of the planets (*Conv.* ii. 14), is assigned to the souls that have sought true fame on earth. They ought to have sought something higher, and therefore they are in the lowest sphere but one; but they accept it as all that they deserve, and find their joy in the perfect justice of the Divine award.

The living Justice doth our thoughts employ  
 So sweetly that they ne'er aside decline,  
 To work for others evil or annoy.  
 As divers tones in music sweet combine,  
 So in our life the several steps uprise, 125  
 And in these spheres make harmony divine.  
 And so within this fair pearl of the skies  
 Shines the bright sheen of Romeo, he whose name  
 And work, though great and fair, gained meagre  
 prize;  
 But those Provençals who against him came 130  
 Have found no cause for mirth; so he fares ill  
 Who counts as loss another's deeds of fame.  
 Four daughters, destined each a throne to fill,  
 Had Raimond Berengario, and 'twas he,  
 Romeo, the low-born stranger, worked his will; 135  
 Yet was he led by envious calumny  
 To call to strict account this man so just,  
 That he for ten gave twelve as usury.  
 So, old and poor, he parted from his trust;  
 And if the world but knew the heart he bore, 140  
 Begging, for very life's sake, crust on crust,  
 Who praise him much would praise him then yet  
 more."

127 For "pearl" see C. ii. 34. The history of Romeo (the word, at first used for one who had been on a pilgrimage to Rome, seems to have passed into a proper name—the Romeo of Verona was probably a contemporary) seems to have been chosen by Dante as a typical instance of the love of fame at the opposite pole to that of Justinian. As told in *Vill.* vi. 90, the story runs thus:—Raimond Berlinghieri (or Berenger) was Count of Provence. A pilgrim came to his court from the shrine of St. James of Compostella, and rose into high favour with the Count. By his counsels the four daughters of Raimond, who had no sons, were married, Margaret to Louis IX. of France (*Purg.* xx. 61), Eleanor to Henry III. of England, Sanzia to Richard, Earl of Cornwall (brother of Henry III.), Beatrice to Charles of Anjou. The barons of Provence, envious of his influence, accused him of wasting his lord's goods. Romeo cleared himself of the charge, gave an account of his stewardship, and then left the court, as he had come to it, on his mule and with his pilgrim's staff. Later historians (*Scart.*) affirm that the latter part of the story has no foundation, and that Romeo died in Provence in 1250, but Dante may well have believed what Villani writes. One can fancy how the magnanimity of the man who thus

*Dogmas—The Sin of Adam—The Incarnation—The Corruptible and Incorruptible*

"*Hosanna, Sanctus Deus Sabaoth,  
Superillustrans claritate tuâ  
Felices ignes horum Malaboth.*"

Thus, turning to his song, appeared to say  
That form I saw, upon whose kingly head 5  
Shone, with a twofold lustre, twy-form ray.  
It and the others danced in measured tread,  
And like to sparks that flit their swift-winged way,  
In sudden distance from me vanishèd.  
I doubted, and within me, "Say it, say," 10  
I cried, "O say it to my Lady fair,  
Who with her sweet dew doth my cravings stay."  
But that deep awe, which o'er me sway doth bear,  
Whenever I or BE or ICE spell,  
Bowed me as one who doth to sleep prepare. 15  
Short while let Beatricè that doubt dwell,  
And then began with such a radiant smile,  
'Twould make a man i' the fire say, All was well.

chose exile and poverty, the result of an unjust accusation, rather than disgrace, would commend itself to the soul of Dante, as not without a parallel in his own character and fortunes (*Life*, c. 8). Such a soul was a fit comrade even for the greatest of the Emperors.

<sup>1</sup> The three Hebrew words indicate possibly an elementary knowledge of Hebrew, for which Dante's friendship with Immanuel ben Salomo of Rome may sufficiently account. "Hosanna," however, is used by him not in its strict meaning as = "Save us," but as in *Matt.* xxi. 9, 15; *Mark* xi. 9; *John* xii. 13, as a vague utterance of praise. "*Sabaoth*" he would find in the *Vulg.* of *James* v. 4 and in the *Te Deum*. "*Malaboth*" appears, instead of the more correct "*Mamlachoth*," in the *Prolog. Gal.* of Jerome prefixed to the *Vulg.* in the sense of "kingdoms," as it is used here (*Witte*, *D. F.* ii. 43).

<sup>5</sup> The "substance" is the soul of Justinian, the "double light" that of the lawgiver and the emperor.

<sup>10</sup> The words of Justinian (*C.* vi. 90-93) had raised a question in Dante's mind. Thrice he whispered to himself "Tell it to her," but thrice his reverence for the very syllables of Beatrice's name (*S.* 2; *V. N.* c. 1) restrained his utterance. His silence was rewarded by a smile which would have brought blessedness even in the flames of *Purg.* xxvii. 52. She reads his thoughts and solves the problem. How could the death of Christ, in itself a righteous expiation of the Divine wrath, call in its turn for another expiation?

" My mind, which no deception can beguile,  
 Hath seen that thou o'er doubt how vengeance  
     just 20  
 Can justly be avenged, dost brood awhile ;  
 But I that bondage from thy mind will thrust :  
 And give thou heed, for know these words of mine  
 Will to thy soul a doctrine high intrust.  
 Because he would not power of will resign 25  
 To curb meant for his good, the man not born,  
 Damning himself, damned also all his line ;  
 And so man's race lay feeble and forlorn,  
 For many an age, in grievous error's way,  
 Till God's Word pleased on earth to make sojourn, 30  
 Where man's frail nature, wont so far to stray  
 From its Creator, in one Person met  
 With IT, as Love Eternal showed the way.  
 Now fix thy glance at that before thee set :  
 This nature, with its own Creator wed, 35  
 Was pure and good, as when unfallen yet ;  
 But by itself alone 'twas banishèd  
 From Paradise, because itself it tore  
 From way which would to truth and life have led.

25 We enter on a profound theological discussion of the Atonement as taught by Aquinas. Adam, by transgressing the restraint imposed upon his will, brought condemnation on himself and all descended from him. So mankind lay diseased and in the darkness of error till the time of the Incarnation of the Divine Word (*Summ.* i. 34, 22, iii. 32, 1). The human nature which He took was sinless, as that of Adam had been at his creation, but it was human nature still, and, as such, exiled from Paradise and rightly subject to the punishment of the cross. Not so, however, the sinless Person who had taken that nature into union with Himself. For Him the death on the cross was an unjust punishment, and the Jews were guilty of that injustice. What on one side "satisfied" the justice of God, "satisfied," on the other, their malice, and the punishment of which Titus was the agent was therefore a righteous vengeance. It will be seen that Dante's theory of the Atonement is not identical with either that of the early Church, or that of Anselm in the *Cur Deus Homo*, or that of Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 46, 1), or the forensic view of a vicarious satisfaction which has been dominant in Protestant theology. Here also he seems to take his own ground and to form a "*parte per es stesso*." Of the great mediæval theologians, Hugh of St. Victor seems the one in whose footsteps he treads most closely. Comp. Oxenham, *Cath. Doctr. of Atonement*, c. iv.; Dorner, *Person of Christ*, P. i. sect. 3, both for this and the next question.



If, therefore, by the nature that it bore 40  
 Be measured what the Cross wrought out of pain,  
 None ever had of righteous vengeance more.  
 But never was such cruel wrong again,  
 If we the Person suffering there behold, 45  
 Who did that nature with His own sustain.  
 Thus from one act spring things of diverse mould;  
 God and the Jews the same death did delight;  
 Earth quaked, and Heaven its portals did unfold.  
 It ought not then to seem hard in thy sight, 50  
 When it is said that righteous punishment  
 Was afterwards avenged by judgment right.  
 But now I see thy mind is straitly pent,  
 With thought on thought entangled and entwined,  
 From which to free itself it waits intent,  
 Thou say'st, 'What I now hear full clear I find, 55  
 But why this was God's will is unrevealed,  
 For our redemption this one way assigned.'  
 This His decree, my brother, lies concealed  
 From each man's eyes who doth a spirit own,  
 O'er which Love's fire no full-grown power 60  
 doth wield.  
 Yet truly since at this same mark 'tis known  
 We may gaze long, with little clearly learned,  
 I'll tell why such plan was as worthiest shown.  
 Goodness Divine, which from Itself hath spurned 65  
 All envy, burning in Itself doth glow,  
 So that eternal beauties are discerned.

<sup>56</sup> The question is an instance of the Rationalism of the inquiring intellect even in the Mediæval Church. Why were the Incarnation and the Passion the method chosen for redemption? Could not God have pardoned mankind without them? To this Beatrice answers on the threshold of the discussion, in the very spirit of Hugh of St. Victor, that none can rightly judge in the matter whose mind has not been ripened in the glow of Divine Love.

<sup>66</sup> The solution starts from the conception of the absolute goodness of the Divine Will. In it there can be no touch of envy (*James* i. 5; *Boeth.* iii. 9). What he creates by a direct act, *i.e.*, the angels and the souls of men, bears on it His stamp of eternity, and its annihilation is inconceivable (*Summ.* i. 65, 1). It is free, and not subject to new or second causes, such, *e.g.*, as the influences of the stars, from which Dante uniformly represents man's will as

Whate'er from It doth as immediate flow,  
No limit knows, because It knows no change,  
Where, as a seal, It doth Its impress show. 70  
Whate'er from It doth as immediate range,  
Is wholly free, as subject unto none  
Of things endowed with novel power and strange.  
More it delights as it is more Its own,  
For the blest beams that all irradiate  
In that most like them are most vivid known. 75  
In all these blessings doth participate  
The human creature, and, if one should fail,  
Needs must he fall from that his high estate.  
Sin only can to disendow prevail,  
And make him unlike to the Good Supreme, 80  
For then but little doth Its light avail:  
And ne'er can he his dignity redeem,  
Unless, where sin leaves void, he satisfy  
With righteous pains for evil's pleasant dream.  
Your nature, when it sinned so utterly 85  
In its first seed, was driven from Paradise,  
As from the glory of such dignity:  
Nor could it be regained, if, subtly wise,  
Thou takest note, by any other way  
Than that which through or this or that ford lies; 90  
Either that God should put the guilt away  
Of His free bounty, or that man for sin  
Due satisfaction should in person pay.

exempted. The more it resembles Him the more He delights therein; and man has this resemblance in a higher measure than any other material creature. If freedom or likeness to God be not found in him, he is fallen from his nobility, and sin has brought about this fall, and so he shares but little in the light of God.

<sup>82</sup> The next stage in the argument is that restoration is impossible without penitence and satisfaction, or, in their absence, the free love of God pardoning without them. Man could not make satisfaction by himself, for his guilt had consisted in aspiring to be like God (*Gen.* iii. 5), and there was no depth of lowliness to which his obedience could descend as a set-off against that guilt. God magnified His goodness more in manifesting Himself in Christ than in remitting sins by a simple act of power, for in that He set forth both His attributes of justice and of mercy. That self-humiliation of the Son of God was of all methods the most magnificent. So far Dante's

Fix now thine eyes the deep abyss within  
 Of the eternal counsels, with thy might, 95  
 Bent the full meaning of my words to win.  
 Man, in his limitations, ne'er aright  
 Could satisfy, since ne'er could he descend,  
 Obeying now, depths answering to the height,  
 Which he thought, disobeying, to ascend ; 100  
 And this the reason is why man could ne'er,  
 Left to himself, make due and full amend.  
 So was it meet that God the task should bear,  
 And in His own ways man's whole life renew ;  
 I say, or in the one, or in the pair. 105  
 But forasmuch as favour doth accrue  
 To work from worker, as it doth disclose  
 Of that heart whence it springs the goodness true,  
 Goodness Divine, whose seal the whole world shows,  
 To work Its will, by all and every way, 110  
 To raise you up again to true life, chose :  
 Nor 'twixt the last night and the primal day  
 Was ever process so sublime and high  
 Wrought or by this or that, or shall for aye ;  
 For God was far more bounteous in supply, 115  
 Giving Himself that man himself might raise,  
 Than if He of Himself had put sin by.  
 And scant and poor had proved all other ways  
 For claims of justice, but that God's own Son,  
 Become incarnate, should Himself abase. 120  
 And now to fill thy cravings every one,  
 I turn again one point to make more clear,  
 That thou may'st see it e'en as I have done.  
 Thou say'st, 'I see the fire, I see the air,  
 The earth and water, and each compound blent, 125  
 Last but a while and then corruption share.'

theory of the Atonement approximates to that of the *Cur Deus Homo* of Anselm, though it is not identical with it.

<sup>124</sup> Yet another doubt arises. Beatrice had said (l. 67) that the creatures of God's hands were sharers in His eternity. But men see that the four

Yet these things God's creative work present ;  
 Therefore, if that which I have said be sure,  
 Corruption's touch for them were never meant.  
 The angels, Brother, and this region pure 130  
 In which thou art, created we may call,  
 In their whole being, as they now endure ;  
 But those, the elements thou namest, all,  
 And those things also which of them are made,  
 Formed by creative virtue, lower fall. 135  
 Created was the matter there displayed ;  
 Created was that virtue which inspires  
 These stars, which rolling round them are conveyed.  
 The soul that every plant or brute acquires 140  
 Draws, with potential elements combined,  
 The light and motion of those holy fires.  
 But this your life immediate source doth find  
 In the Supreme Beneficence, and Love  
 So fills it that It thither draws our mind.  
 And thus thou may'st with further reasoning prove 145  
 Your resurrection, if thou meditate  
 How human flesh was fashioned from above,  
 Then, when our two first parents were create."

elements, and the creatures that are compounded of them, are transitory and corruptible. How is that seeming contradiction to be reconciled ? And so there comes another *distinguo*. Angels and the heavenly spheres and the souls of men (*Purg.* xvi. 85, xxv. 72) are the result of an immediate act of creation. They therefore are incorruptible (*Summ.* i. 66, 2, i. 2. 49, 4). But the visible material world, compounded of the elements, is the work of intermediate and created agents, the effect of second causes, and therefore subject to decay. This holds good of the stars as distinct from the heavenly spheres, of the "soul" or life of animals or plants. But man's soul, as had been said before, comes from the creative act of God without any intermediate agency. Yes, and this is true also of man's body. That also was represented in *Gen.* i. as created by the hand of God. And on this ground, as in itself sufficient, Dante is content to rest not only the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. I state, without discussing, his argument. It will be clear, at least, how far his belief was from what we have learnt to call the doctrine of Conditional Immortality.

*The Third Heaven, of Venus—Charles Martel of Hungary—  
Eternal Providence—Diversities of Gifts*

To its own cost, the world to hear was found  
 How the fair Cyprian darted love insane,  
 In that third epicycle moving round ;  
 Wherefore not only in old error vain  
 Did ancient nations give her honour due  
 Of votive cries and sacrifices slain,  
 But worshipped Cupid and Dione too,  
 This as her mother, that as her dear son,  
 And said that Dido's lap his presence knew ;  
 And so from her, through whom my song's begun, 10  
 They took the name of that same planet fair,  
 Which, from one side or the other, woos the sun.  
 I did not see that I had mounted there,  
 But proof enough my Lady gave to me  
 Through wondrous increase of her beauty rare. 15  
 And as within a flame a spark we see,  
 And as within a voice a voice we hear,  
 When one is firm, one changes fitfully,

<sup>1</sup> From the sphere of Mercury the travellers pass to that of Venus. Following the same path of thought as to stellar influences as before, the souls that are met here are those whose earthly life was coloured by the temperament (one shrinks in this case from the adjective which corresponds to "mercurial" or "jovial") which that planet was believed to impress on those born under its influence, and which, even when Divine grace triumphed over the temptations which it brought with it, made them different from other blessed souls.

<sup>3</sup> An epicycle was one of the special terms of the Ptolemaic system, which assumed that each planet moved in a circle which always had its centre in the circumference of the great orbit of the planet. I need not enter into the astronomic reason for this. Milton, it will be remembered, probably following Galileo, sneers at them (*P. L.* viii. 84).

<sup>7</sup> Dione, the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, was the mother of Venus Aphrodite, and, with Cupid, the son of Venus, shared the worship which was paid to her (Hesiod, *Theog.* 353; Hom. *Il.* v. 370). For Dido, see *Æn.* i. 657-660.

<sup>12</sup> Venus as a planet is now before the sun, and now behind, known in the morning as Lucifer (*Isa.* xiv. 12), in the evening as Hesperus.

<sup>13</sup> The ascent, as before (*C.* ii. 23), is instantaneous. All that he knows is that the face of Beatrice is radiant with a new glory; and in the brightness, lamps yet more bright are discerned, dancing rhythmically in their joy.

<sup>18</sup> The description comes from an expert in music, who distinguished

So then in that light other lamps appear,  
 Moving in circle, more or less in speed, 20  
 Methinks, as is their gaze eternal clear.  
 Never did winds from chilly clouds proceed  
 So swift, invisible or visible,  
 That would not seem as slack and slow indeed  
 To one who had those lights divine seen well, 25  
 Come to us, leaving off their winding dance,  
 Begun where Seraphim in glory dwell.  
 And behind those that did in front advance  
 Sounded "Hosanna," so that aye since then  
 I long it should once more my soul entrance. 30  
 And one of them drew nigh, and in this strain  
 Began alone: "All ready now are we  
 To do thy will, that in us joy thou gain.  
 We turn with princedom that in high Heaven be, 35  
 One orbit, one revolving, and one love,  
 As in the world 'twas said of old by thee,  
 '*Ye who with simple will the third Heaven move,*'  
 And are so full of love, that, thee to please,  
 Rest for a while shall not less welcome prove." 40  
 And when mine eyes had turned away from these  
 To seek my Lady with due reverence,  
 And were by her content and set at ease,

between the *canto fermo* of one who sustained the main theme of song, while other voices varied in their melodious play around it.

<sup>22</sup> The "visible" winds are the lightning-flashes which mediæval meteorology explained as being caused by the collision of opposing currents (*Trés.* ii. 37).

<sup>28</sup> Seraphim are named as being, in the current Angelology of the time, those who excelled in love, as the Cherubim (*C.* xi. 36-38, xxviii. 99) excelled in knowledge.

<sup>30</sup> Have we the feeling which had been often felt after the psalmody of earth transferred to the Hosanna of Paradise? For Dante's love of music, comp. *Purg.* ii. 108.

<sup>32</sup> The joy of the blessed souls consists in imparting joy. They are ready to satisfy the desires of the poet because his very presence among them has satisfied their desires. That presence is dear to them because in the *Canzone* which they quote (*C.* xiv.), and on which he evidently looks back with a parental fondness, he had already sung their praises. According to the classification of the seven spheres, that of Venus belongs to the Principalities (*C.* xxviii. 125; *Conv.* ii. 6).

Back to that light they turned whose eloquence  
 So much had promised, and "Speak, who are ye?"  
 My voice exclaimed with eagerness intense. <sup>45</sup>  
 Ah! how that light grew more and more to see  
 When I thus spoke, through that great gladness new  
 Which came to crown its old felicity.  
 Thus changed, it spake: "The world my presence  
 knew  
 Short time below, and had it been but more, <sup>50</sup>  
 Much ill that shall be then should not ensue.  
 My great joy hides me from thee, and doth pour  
 Its radiance round about me, and conceals,  
 Like creature whom its own silk covers o'er.  
 Thou lov'dst me much, good cause that love reveals; <sup>55</sup>  
 For had I stayed below I then had shown  
 More than the budding leaves of what love feels.

<sup>44</sup> I follow the reading "*Di chi siete*" rather than its variants "*Deh! chi,*" and others.

<sup>49</sup> The speaker is Charles Martel (*b.* 1270, *d.* 1295), son of Charles II, of Naples (*Purg.* vii. 127, xx. 79), and titular king of Hungary. He married (1291) Clemenza, daughter of the Emperor Rudolph of Hapsburg. Commentators describe him as fair in person, a lover of music, and song, and beauty in all its forms. In 1294 he stayed for twenty days in Florence waiting for the return of his two brothers from France, and, as lines 55-57 show, he and Dante were drawn together by the ties of a warm and intimate friendship. Possibly he took the place in the poet's heart which had been left vacant by Guido Cavalcanti (*Il.* x. 63). Villani (viii. 13) dwells at length on the magnificence of his retinue, in green and scarlet, with shields on which the arms of Naples and Hungary were emblazoned in red and gold.

<sup>50</sup> The words probably point to hopes, which he had shared with Dante, that he might have averted the contest between his father's house and that of Aragon.

<sup>52</sup> Few comparisons are more absolutely original. The silkworm hides itself in its own silk; the spirits are sheathed by the effulgence of their own joy. In C. xxvi. 97 we have another of the same kind, perhaps even stranger.

<sup>55</sup> The words seem almost to imply a David and Jonathan attachment, yet, unless we assume that he was one of an embassy to Naples at the time of Charles's coronation there as king of Hungary in 1290, their personal intercourse must have been limited to the short period of Charles's stay at Florence. Possibly the idealist, "*trasmutabile sempre*" (C. v. 99), dreamt a dream of being a king's friend with an opening for doing great things. Charles was at once the heir of Provence through his grandmother, Beatrice, of Naples, in direct succession to his father, of Hungary (though with a title not undisputed), through his mother Mary, of Sicily, through his wife, Clemenza, and would have found in his children heirs at once of the houses of Hapsburg and of Anjou. Such a prince, bright, fascinating, friendly, might

That left bank that is watered by the Rhone,  
 Where with the Sorgia's waters it is blent,  
 Me for a while as sovereign lord did own, 60  
 And that horn of Ausonia whose extent  
 Bari, Catona, Gaeta doth hold,  
 Whence to the sea are Tronto, Verde sent.  
 Already did my brow the crown enfold  
 Of that fair land where Danube's waters flow, 65  
 When they no more their German banks behold ;  
 And fair Trinacria, which doth darkened show  
 Between Pachynum and Pelorus, near  
 The gulf where Eurys doth most fiercely blow,  
 (Not through Typhœus, but the sulphur there,) 70  
 Would have still waited for the kingly line  
 That through me Charles' and Rudolph's stamp  
 doth bear,  
 If evil rule, which ever wrath doth twine  
 Round subjects' hearts, had let Palermo be,  
 Nor to the cry of ' Death ! Death ! Death ! '  
 incline, 75

well have seemed to Dante likely to be among the mightiest potentates of the time, inaugurating a reign of peace. His death was probably the first of the great disappointments which were the discipline of his life, and which culminated in the death of Henry of Luxemburg (vol. i. p. cix.) As it was, the succession of Charles Robert, son of Charles Martel, to the throne of Naples was disputed by his uncle Robert, the third son of Charles II., who was recognised as heir by his father's will. Clemenza died a few days after her husband.

<sup>59</sup> The Sorgue, memorable in its connection with Petrarch, flows from Vaucluse into the Rhone a little above Avignon.

<sup>61</sup> Bari, on the Adriatic coast ; Gaeta, on the Bay of Naples ; Catona (with *v. l.* Crotona), on the southern point of Calabria, opposite Messina, are named as limits which practically include the whole of Ausonia = Southern Italy. Two rivers bear the name of Verde, one a tributary of the Tronto, not far from Ascoli, the other is identified with the Garigliano. Here probably the latter is meant, the object being to give the two boundaries of the kingdom of Naples. Comp. *Purg.* iii. 131.

<sup>65</sup> The country watered by the Danube = Hungary ; Trinacria = Sicily Pachynum and Pelorus are two of the promontories which form the points of its triangle.

<sup>69</sup> Eurys is the south-east wind, or sirocco, which blows over the Gulf of Catania. Dante, as a physicist, is careful to note that he does not accept the legend that the Titan Typhœus, buried under Ætna (*Met.* v. 346-352 ; *Æn.* iii. 560-587), was the cause of the eruption and the wind.

<sup>73</sup> Dante puts the condemnation of the tyranny which led to the Sicilian



And if my brother had foreseen this, he  
 The greedy Catalonians' poverty  
 Had fled, that he from trouble might be free ;  
 For truly there is need of heedful eye,  
 His own, or others', that upon his boat, 80  
 O'erladen, no more heavy load should lie.  
 His nature, which doth bear degenerate note,  
 Niggard from bounteous, such troops had employed  
 As had not cared o'er heaped-up chest to gloat."  
 "Because I deem the lofty bliss enjoyed 85  
 Through this thy speech, by me, O Master mine,  
 There, whence all good starts, where its goal doth  
 bide,  
 Is, as I see it, seen by eyes of thine,  
 It more delights me, and this too is dear,  
 That thou discern'st it in the Mind divine. 90  
 Glad hast thou made me ; e'en so make it clear,  
 Since in thy speech I find perplexity,  
 How from sweet seed can bitter plant appear."

Vespers (he was seventeen when the tidings reached Italy in April 1282) into the mouth of the grandson of the tyrant. That cry of "Death" rang through all Italy, and was even now echoing in his ears. If I mistake not, we may find other echoes in *S. viii. 8* ; *Canz. iv. 42*. Had the two friends conversed on the tragedy when they met in 1294 ?

<sup>76</sup> Robert, the younger brother of Charles Martel (*n.* on l. 55), was Duke of Calabria, but did not come to the throne of Naples till 1309. He and his brother John were left as hostages in the hands of Alphonso of Aragon in 1291, and were only liberated on the intervention of Boniface VIII. in June 1295 (*Purg. vii. 119, xx. 79*). Robert, on his return to Naples, brought with him many Catalan officers and other dependants, and their greed of gain passed into a proverb, at least in Naples, as a burden which the exchequer could scarcely bear.

<sup>82</sup> The liberality of Charles II. is the only virtue which Dante allows him (*C. xix. 128*). The avarice of Robert is noted by Villani (*xii. 10*). Petrarch, on the other hand, who received his crown of laurel at his hands, praises him to the skies as a patron of letters. Benvenuto confirms Dante with an anecdote. Robert had quoted to his Chancellor the text "*Spiritus ubi vult spirat*," and the Chancellor replied "*Robertus, ubi vult pilat*" (*Scart. and (Butt.) Comp. Purg. vii. 124, xx. 79*).

<sup>83</sup> The joy of Dante at seeing and hearing his friend is mingled with a new difficulty. He had believed in the doctrine of heredity. His friend's words (l. 82) seemed to imply the opposite. The answer is found in the general truth that the providence of God, working through the stellar influences (l. 99), ordereth all things well. If that were not so, the *cosmos* of the world would become a chaos (*comp. Hooker, E. P. i. 1. 3, 2 ; Conv. iii. 15*),

So I to him ; and he to me : " Could I  
To this thy question but one truth explain, 95  
To what thou turn'st thy back thou'lt turn thine eye.  
The Good which all this realm thy steps attain  
Turns and contents, so works that, as a might,  
Its Providence in these vast orbs doth reign :  
And not alone things seen with prescient sight 100  
Dwell in that Mind that's in itself complete,  
But with them all that works to keep them right.  
And so where'er this bow sends arrow fleet,  
It falls, predestined, to its end foreseen,  
As dart directed to its centre meet. 105  
If this were not so, then this Heaven had been,  
Where now thou walkest, such that it would be  
Of ruin, not of wisest art the scene.  
This cannot chance unless those stars we see  
Be ruled by Minds that feeble are and frail, 110  
The First Cause failing to work perfectly.  
Would'st thou this truth should more itself unveil ? "  
" Not so," said I, " for 'tis impossible  
That Nature should in necessities fail."  
Then he : " Now say if it would be less well 115  
For man on earth were he not citizen."  
" Yea," said I ; " here no reason need'st thou tell."  
" And can this be unless the lives of men  
Differ on earth, through office different ?  
No, if your Master writes with wisdom's pen." 120

and this would imply imperfection not only in the angelic intelligences (l. 37 which guide the stars, but in their Primal Cause, *i.e.*, in God Himself.

<sup>116</sup> The answer to the question is assumed from Arist. *Pol.* i. 1, and is expounded at length in *Mon.* i. 12-14. Man is by nature, that is, by God's appointment, born for a corporate, not an individual, life. He finds his perfection as member of a state. But a state implies diversity of gifts, characters, functions, and therefore there is this diversity, wrought as before through the stellar influences, in the characters of those who compose it. As extreme instances of this diversity we have Solon, Xerxes, Melchizedek, and Dædalus. And the planets work out their appointed function without looking to the stock from which men spring. Esau and Jacob are children of the same parents (Augustine somewhat more logically takes them as an argument against the astrologers, *Civ. Dei*, v. 4). Quirinus

So to this point deductively he went,  
 And then concluded: "Therefore needs must be  
 That diverse are the roots of each man's bent:  
 So here a Solon, Xerxes there we see,  
 Here a Melchizedek, and there the man 125  
 Whose flight through air marred his son's destiny;  
 The spherul nature, which, like seal, its plan  
 Stamps on man's mortal wax, works well its art,  
 But difference of hostel doth not scan.  
 Thence comes it Esau hath his separate part 130  
 In birth from Jacob, that Quirinus came  
 From sire so base he claims from Mars to start.  
 A generated nature still the same  
 Pathway would take as those that generate  
 Unless God's providence that law o'ercame. 135  
 Now before thee is that behind of late,  
 But that thou know that I in thee delight,  
 Thee with corollary I'll decorate.  
 Ever doth Nature, if perchance it light  
 On alien fortune, like all other seed 140  
 Out of its own soil, fail to work aright;  
 And if the world below would give good heed  
 To Nature's first and fundamental rule,  
 Then would it have a virtuous race indeed;

=Romulus), the son of Rhea Silvia by an unknown father, was so famous a warrior that men ascribed his parentage to Mars. It is singular to find Dante rejecting what Virgil gives as history (*Æn.* i. 274).

<sup>133</sup> The doctrine of heredity therefore holds good, subject to the provision that it is not a necessary law, but may be modified by the Divine Will working through the stars or otherwise.

<sup>139</sup> The practical inference from the theory is that Nature gives the qualities which fit men for a vocation of some kind, but that circumstances, *i.e.*, the results of man's perversity, thwart her purpose. What was wanted for a perfect polity was that men should study a man's qualities as indicating his vocation. As it was, they too often made the born soldier a monk, and the born king a preacher. The allusions come appropriately from Charles Martel. His elder brother Lewis abdicated his princely rights, became a Franciscan friar, and in 1296 was made Bishop of Toulouse by Boniface VIII. Robert, who became king of Naples, on the contrary (*Vill.* xii. 10), gave himself to philosophy and theology as if he had been a Dominican preacher. How he could sermonise, when occasion offered, may be seen in his letter to the Florentines after the memorable

But ye still turn off to religion's school  
 One who was born to gird himself with sword,  
 And take as king some sermonising fool;  
 And so your track the right road hath ignored."

145

## CANTO IX

*The Lovers in the Heaven of Venus—Cunizza—Folco of  
 Marseilles—Rahab*

WHEN that thy Charles had thus, Clemenza fair,  
 Made all things clear, he cited, one by one,  
 The ills his seed through cunning frauds should bear,  
 But said, "Be dumb, and let the years roll on."  
 So I can say but this, that wailing due  
 Will come for all wrongs that to you are done.  
 And now that holy light's life yet anew  
 Turned to the Sun which fills it with its rays,  
 As to that Good where "All in all" is true.  
 Ah! souls deceived, unholy in your ways,  
 Who turn your hearts from good like this, and long  
 With upturned brows for vain and false displays!

5

10

inundation of the Arno in 1333 (*Vill.* xii. 4). Dante's feelings were embittered by the fact that he had been the ally of the Florentines throughout in their resistance to Henry of Luxemburg, and on the Emperor's death had been appointed Vicar of the Empire in Italy by the Pope.

<sup>1</sup> The wife and daughter of Charles Martel were both named Clemenza. Most of the ancient commentators refer the words to the latter. The former, however, seems more likely. She was known to Dante in the beauty of her youth, and her daughter, wife of Louis X. of France, was probably not so known. Some writers identify Clemenza with the mother of Charles, but she was Mary of Hungary.

<sup>5</sup> The words refer to the treatment of Charles's children by his brother Robert, who maintained his position as king of Naples in defiance of their rightful claims (see *z.* on C. viii. 55). The retribution implied in l. 6 is found in the death of Robert's brother Peter and his nephew Carlotto at the battle of Monte Cattini, in that of his only son, Charles, Duke of Calabria, and the invasion of Apulia by Lewis, king of Hungary (*Vill.* ix. 62).

<sup>10</sup> The reproach is general in terms, but is obviously meant for the wrongdoers, Robert and his counsellors, implied in l. 2. The readings vary between "*fatue empie*," and "*fatue ed empie*."

And lo! another of that shining throng  
 Approached me, and its will to give delight  
 Made known by flashing forth a ray more strong. <sup>15</sup>  
 The eyes of Beatrice, fixed aright  
 Upon me, as before, assured me well  
 Of dear assent to my desire for light.  
 "I pray thee, quickly meet my wish, and tell,  
 O Spirit blest," I said, "by some sure sign <sup>20</sup>  
 That in thy mind my thoughts reflected dwell."  
 And then that light, which yet as new did shine,  
 From out the depth whence erst its song flowed  
 on,  
 Drew near, as though good deed brought joy divine.

<sup>13</sup> The other splendour is, as l. 32 shows, Cunizza, who, in answer to Dante's wish, tells the story of her life. It was a sufficiently strange one. The sister of Ezzelin da Romano (b. 1189), she had been married in 1212 (probably it was a political marriage) to Richard, Count of St. Boniface, the head of the Guelphs of Verona. She fascinated Sordello (*Purg.* vi. 74, vii. 3), and with him left her husband's house. Sordello went to Provence, and she retired to her brother Alberic's court at Treviso, where she had an intrigue with a knight named Bonio. On his death Ezzelin gave her in marriage to Count Rainier of Braganza. She next appears, on his death, as the wife of Salione Buzzicarini, Ezzelin's astrologer. After the death of Ezzelin (*H.* xii. 110) and his brother, she found a retreat in Florence. The last fact known of her is that she made her will in that city (1265), in the house of Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, father of Dante's friend Guido (*H.* x. 53). One wonders at first that so stern a judge as Dante did not place her along with Semiramis or Dido, or, at least, as waiting to pass through the cleansing fire of *Purg.* xxvii. 49. The fact just recorded contains, perhaps, the solution of the problem. Her latter days at Florence were said to have been marked by piety and charity. Even before that, she was said to have relieved, as far as she could, the victims of Ezzelin's oppression. By her will she gave freedom to her serfs (Troja, *Velt.* 1856, p. 294). The date of her death is unknown. It is possible that Dante himself may have had early memories of the gracious penitent lady, still retaining much of the fascination of her former beauty, or may have heard of such memories, and of the romance of her love for the great Mantuan poet from Guido Cavalcanti, who was sixteen years older than himself. Anyhow, he believed that she had repented, and therefore did not shrink from placing her in Paradise. He remembered, it may be, the story of a certain woman who also had had five husbands (*John* iv. 18), of a woman whose sins, that were many, were forgiven her because she loved much (*Luke* vii. 47). We Englishmen, at all events, may remember that Archbishop Tenison did not refuse to preach Nell Gwynne's funeral sermon, and assumed in it that she also had found pardon and peace in the Paradise of God. Browning, who identifies Cunizza with the Palma of his *Sordello*, the daughter of Ezzelin, gives a very different version of her story and character; but as in the case of Sordello, we have to regret the absence of any *pièces justificatives*

In that part of the land that vile has grown, 25  
 Italian, which between Rialto lies  
 And where Piava's, Brenta's springs are known,  
 A hill is seen, not over-high, to rise,  
 Whence 'gainst that land erewhile was downward  
 driven  
 A fiery torch in hostile enterprise. 30  
 To this and me one parent stock was given:  
 Cunizza was I called, and I shine here  
 Because o'ercome by this bright star of Heaven.  
 But joyfully, self-pardoning, I bear 35  
 What caused my fate, nor doth it breed annoy,  
 Which to your crowd, perchance, will strange appear.  
 Of this bright jewel, radiant in its joy,  
 Which of our heaven nearest is to me,  
 Great fame remained, nor aught shall it destroy, 40  
 Until this century quintupled shall be.  
 See if man's course for virtue should decide,  
 So that new life may come when this shall flee!  
 And yet they think not thus who now abide  
 'Twixt Tagliamento and Adige's shore,  
 And, though sore smitten, mourn not for their 45  
 pride.

<sup>25</sup> The Marca Trevigiana is described, after Dante's manner, by its boundaries, the Rialto of Venice, the Brenta on the east (*H.* xv. 7), which rises in the hill-country of Chiarentana, and the Piava on the west, both flowing into the Gulf of Venice.

<sup>28</sup> The hill is Romano, between Padua and Bassano, on which stood the castle of the tyrant Ezzelin. P. Dante reports a tradition that the mother of Ezzelin dreamt before his birth that she brought forth a fiery torch, the flame of which devoured the whole country round (*H.* xii. 110).

<sup>34</sup> The thought is a development of that of Lethe and Eunoe in *Purg.* xxxiii. Cunizza tells how her life had been swayed by the influence of Venus, with no touch of shame, or even sorrow. All had worked for good, and, strange as it might seem to those who knew not the secrets of the new life, she could rejoice in all.

<sup>37</sup> The light is Folco of Marseilles (l. 94). The words of l. 40 have been interpreted as meaning that Folco's fame (he died in 1231) should last to the year 1500, or 1800, or 6500, according to the meaning given to "*incinqua*." Was the poet reckoning on the immortality of fame given to Folco through his own verse?

<sup>43</sup> The people of the Trevisa March (the two boundaries are named in l. 44) are condemned as wanting in the energy which seeks after fame.

But soon shall Padua dye the lake with gore  
 Which bathes the walls of old Vicenza's town,  
 As stubborn against duty as of yore.  
 And where Cagnan' and Sile both flow down,  
 One lords it proudly, goes with head reared high, 50  
 The web to catch whom is already thrown.  
 And Feltro yet will wail the treachery  
 Of its base shepherd, guilty so that none  
 To Malta came for like delinquency.  
 Full large would be the vat in which should run 55  
 The blood of the Ferrarese that he shed,  
 And weary he who, weighing, one by one,  
 The drops this kind priest shall have lavished  
 To show his zeal for party; gifts thus famed  
 To that land's life shall be close fashioned. 60

Their sufferings under Ezzelin had not led them to repentance, and therefore Cunizza prophesies of the yet sharper punishments that are in store for them.

<sup>46</sup> Vicenza lay between the Guelph city Padua and the Ghibelline Verona. After the death of Ezzelin in 1259 it became subject to Padua, which in 1311 expelled Henry VII.'s vicar, and massacred the Ghibellines (*Vill.* ix. 36; *Purg.* vi. 91). Can Grande was then appointed Imperial Vicar of Vicenza, and defeated the Paduans in 1314 on the banks of the Bacchiglione, on which both cities stand, dyeing its waters with their blood, because they had held out against their duty to the Emperor, Henry VII.

<sup>49</sup> The two rivers named meet at Trevisa. The noble who lords it haughtily is Richard da Camino, son of the good Gherardo of *Purg.* xv. 124, who was assassinated (1312) while playing at chess, as some said, at the instigation of Can Grande, while others saw in it the revenge of a noble whose wife he had seduced. For him, therefore, Cunizza says, the web of destiny was already woven (*Murat. Ann.* 1312, in *Scart.*).

<sup>52</sup> The Bishop of Feltro was Alessandro Novello (1298-1320). In 1314 he surrendered some Ghibelline fugitives who had taken refuge in his palace to the Podestà of Ferrara, by whom they were put to death. Malta was apparently a prison where priestly criminals were sentenced to a life-long confinement, but commentators are at sea as to its locality, Rome, Montefiascone on the Lake of Bolsena, and Cittadella in the Paduan territory, being all named. The *Chron. Patav.* in *Murat. Antiq. Ital.* iv. 1139, describes the opening of this prison in 1256, when its inmates were led out, worn and haggard and shrinking from the light. On the other hand, Scartazzini decides in favour of a prison at Viterbo, mentioned in an unpublished chronicle as having been built in 1255 for prisoners condemned by the Pope, and known as La Malta. Such a prison, Dante says, would be the fit abode for the priest who had taken this way of showing that he was true to his party—a way only too congenial to the sanguinary temper of his countrymen.

Above are mirrors, Thrones ye them have named,  
 And thence God doth, as judging, on us shine,  
 So that right good seems all we've thus proclaimed."  
 Here she was silent, giving me a sign  
 That she had turned elsewhither, as she flew, 65  
 Along her orbit, on her former line.  
 The other glad one, whom before I knew,  
 Became a thing resplendent to my sight,  
 As when the sun lights up a ruby's hue.  
 On high through joy there comes increase of light, 70  
 As smiles appear on earth; but down below,  
 As the mind grieves the shade grows dark as night.  
 "God seeth all; from Him thy sight doth flow,"  
 I said, "O blessed spirit, so that nought  
 Of what He wills escapes thy power to know. 75  
 That voice of thine, whence joy to Heaven is brought,  
 With song that ever flows from those blest fires,  
 Who of their six wings have a mantle wrought,  
 Why fails it now to answer my desires?  
 I had not lingered so for thy demands, 80  
 Knew I, as thou my heart, what thine requires."  
 "The greatest valley where the sea expands,"  
 Then in this strain his words began to flow,  
 "Except that ocean compassing all lands,  
 Between discordant shores so far doth go 85  
 'Gainst the sun's course, it makes meridian  
 There where at first it forms horizon low.

<sup>61</sup> The Thrones are the third order of the hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 7). They, like other angels, are as mirrors reflecting the Divine knowledge of things past, present, and to come, and thus Cunizza can vouch for the truth of her predictions. Comp. C. xxviii. 103 *Conv.* ii. 6.

<sup>67</sup> On Cunizza's departure the soul of Folco glows with a new brightness, that being the sign of joy in Paradise, as are smiles on earth, even as gloom or darkness are signs of sorrow in Hell. Encouraged by that brightness, Dante applies to him for further knowledge. The student will note the *tour de force* of the verbs formed from pronouns in l. 73, 81—*s'inluia, m'intuassi t'immi*—which I have been compelled to paraphrase. The fires with the six wings are the Seraphim of *Isai.* vi. 2.

<sup>82</sup> The greatest valley is the Mediterranean; the sea that engirdles the earth is the great ocean. The former is described after Dante's astronomical



Along that valley's shore my childhood ran,  
 'Twixt Ebro and the Magra, which divides  
 With short course Genoese from Tuscan man. 90  
 With the same sun from dawn till darkness hides,  
 Lie Buggea and the land from whence I came,  
 That with its own blood warmed its harbour tides.  
 Folco that people called me, who my name  
 Knew well, and now this sphere by me in turn 95  
 Imprest becomes, as I by it became ;  
 Because not more did Belus' daughter burn,  
 Sychæus and Creusa both betrayed,  
 Then I while yet my youth was apt to learn,  
 Nor that deluded Rhodopean maid, 100  
 Demophōon's victim, nor Alcides, when  
 At Iole's fair shrine his soul was laid.  
 Here mourn we not, but smile for what was then ;  
 Not at the guilt—that comes not to our mind—  
 But at the Foresight ordering all for men. 105

manner as making its western extremity the horizon to the meridian of its eastern, *i.e.*, as extending over ninety degrees of the earth's surface (*Purg.* xxvii. 1).

<sup>89</sup> The river Macra or Magra, in the Lunigiana, was recognised in Dante's time as the boundary between the Genoese territory and that of Florence. The Ebro is the Spanish river of that name. Marseilles is supposed to lie half-way between the two, nearly in the same meridian of longitude as Buggea, a city in Algeria. The slaughter referred to is that described by Lucan (iii. 572) as taking place when Brutus besieged Marseilles.

<sup>94</sup> Folco or Folchetto is named in *V. E.* ii. 6 as a Provençal poet. The facts reported of him are that he was the son of a wealthy merchant of Genoa ; that he wrote *Canzoni* and *Serventi* after the manner of the Troubadours ; that he was high in favour with Richard I. of England and Count Raymond of Toulouse ; that he loved the wife of another patron, Barale of Marseilles, and to conceal his passion pretended to love her sister ; that on her death, and that of his own wife, he renounced the world and entered a Cistercian monastery ; that he was afterwards Bishop of Marseilles, and took an active part in the persecution of the Albigenses. It is obvious that some portions of this history presented a parallel, more or less close, to Dante's own experience, and may have drawn out his sympathy for the strangely adventurous life.

<sup>98</sup> The daughter of Belus=Dido. Sychæus was her first husband. Creusa, the first wife of Æneas (*H.* v. 62 ; *Æn.* i. 720-722).

<sup>100</sup> Phyllis, of Mount Rhodope in Thrace, was beloved by Demophōon of Athens. On his deserting her she was changed into an almond-tree (Ovid, *Heroid.* ii.). Hercules, after conquering Eurytus, king of Thrace, fell in love with his daughter, Iole, brought her to his home, and hence roused the jealousy of Deianeira (*Met.* ix. 134-238 ; *Heroid.* ix. 5, and *Soph. Trach.*).

<sup>103</sup> The secret of the calm joy of the souls that had been sinful is ex-

Here gaze we on the skill which hath designed  
 Such vast effect, and so the good we see,  
 From world on high to world below consigned.  
 But that each wish of thine thou bear with thee  
 Fulfilled, that had its birth in this our sphere, 110  
 My speech a little while prolonged must be.  
 Thou fain would'st know whom light encircleth here,  
 One who beside me sparkling so is seen,  
 As flashes sunlight on the waters clear.  
 Now know thou that within there rests serene, 115  
 Rahab, and being in our hosts arrayed,  
 Is in their highest order sealed as queen.  
 She by this Heaven, where comes to point the shade  
 Which your earth casts, was welcomed first of all  
 The souls with which the Christ His triumph  
 made. 120  
 Well was it she, as trophy, should recall  
 Somewhere in Heaven that glorious victory,  
 Which to the lot of outstretched hands did fall,

plained. Lethe has taken away all painful memory of evil (*Purg.* xxxiii. 96), and it is seen only as being what, when repented of, it actually was—a stepping-stone to higher things. The induction is carried farther in the case of Rahab the harlot (*Josh.* ii.-iv.), who was foremost among the souls rescued by the Descent into Hell. I have not found any earlier trace of this belief. She is named as an example of the "harlots" who "enter the kingdom of Heaven" (*Isid. Hisp. Comm. in Jos.* ii.). Rahab is not named in the Gospel of Nicodemus, which is the starting-point of most traditions of the subject.

118 The earth's shadow is assumed to terminate on the surface of Venus. The souls that were in the three lower spheres were, that is, still in the shadow of earthly affections, and therefore excluded from the higher degrees of blessedness.

120 Rahab, *i.e.*, had been in the *Limbus Patrum* (*H.* iv. 46-63), waiting for salvation. She shared in the triumph of the Descent into Hades, and of all the souls then rescued, she was the first to find her appointed sphere in Venus. One wonders at not finding the Magdalene in that planet. Did Dante avoid the commonplaces of mediæval tradition, or did he question the tradition, which, from Gregory the Great onward, identified her with the "woman which was a sinner" of *Luke* vii. 42?

123 The words have been explained (1) of the two hands that were nailed on the cross, (2) of those of Rahab as she let down the spies, (3) of those which Joshua stretched out in prayer and thus obtained victory (*Ecclus.* xlv. 1-3). Of these, (1) seems preferable. The fact that the harlot of Jericho was in Paradise was a witness of the redeeming love.

Because she saw with fond and favouring eye  
 Joshua's first glory in that Holy Land, 125  
 Which the Pope keeps not much in memory.  
 Thy city, which was planted by his hand  
 Who first in rebel pride his Maker spurned,  
 And by whose envy so much woe was planned,  
 Brings forth and spreads the flower which curse 130  
 hath earned,  
 Which leads the sheep and eke the lambs astray,  
 Since it the shepherd to a wolf hath turned.  
 For this the Gospels men have cast away,  
 And the great Doctors, while Decretals claim 135  
 Such study as their margins soiled betray.  
 The Cardinals and Pope devour the same,  
 Nor ever turn their thoughts to Nazareth,  
 Where Gabriel once with wings wide open came.

<sup>126</sup> Acre had been taken by the Saracens in 1291. Neither Nicholas III. nor Boniface VIII. had taken active measures for a new crusade. Still less was that to be expected from the spontaneous action of one of the Avignon Popes. If, as is probable, this Canto was written after the death of Henry VII., we may remember that he had planned a crusade (*Vill.* ix. 1). Clement V. and John XXII. contented themselves with raising money for it. The transition from Jericho to Florence and the vices of the Popes seems somewhat abrupt. Her resistance to the Emperor had clearly embittered the feelings of the exile against the city of his birth and the Guelph cause with which she was identified. To him Florence is a plant of Satan's planting, fruitful in a malignant envy like his (*Matt.* xv. 13; *Wisd.* ii. 24). The coins of Florence, gold as well as silver, were stamped with the lily, a *fleur-de-lys*, which was the badge of the city, and were hence known as florins. They served as a standard of currency throughout Italy, and were reproduced, with the addition of his name, by Pope John XXII. at Avignon in 1322 (*Vill.* ix. 171). So Dante says the greed of gain had turned the shepherd into a wolf (*H.* i. 49).

<sup>134</sup> Forged decretals, edicts, and letters of the early Popes first appeared under Nicholas I. in the ninth century. They were received as authentic by Innocent III., and became the chief armoury of the Popes in their warfare against the Empire. Gregory IX. had five books of them compiled by Raymond da Pennaforte. Boniface VIII. added a sixth. In *Mon.* iii. 3 and *Ep.* ix. 7 Dante speaks with the utmost scorn of the theologians who gave their whole time and study to them, deserting Augustine and Gregory, Ambrose, Dionysius, and Beda. Roger Bacon, on the other hand, vents his wrath upon the students who devoted themselves to the civil law, the basis of the Ghibelline theory of polity, which was "destroying the Church of God, and through which the whole world was lying in wickedness." *Comp. Stud.* c. 55; *Op. Tert.* c. 24.

<sup>137</sup> The Popes care little for Nazareth, either as part of the Holy Land

# PARADISE

## CANTO X

But Vaticano, and what else is yet  
 Sacred in Rome, the chosen burial-place 140  
 Of warriors who in Peter's line were set,  
 Shall soon be freed from the adulterous race."

## CANTO X

*The Fourth Heaven, of the Sun—The Theologians—Albert of  
 Cologne—Thomas Aquinas, and others*

GAZING upon His Son, with that high Love  
 Which each alike breathes forth eternally,  
 The first great Power, all human speech above,  
 Whate'er in mind or place revolves on high,  
 Made with such order that who looks thereon 5  
 Can never fail to taste His majesty.  
 Look thou with me, O Reader—look straight on  
 To those high spheres, and chiefly to the part  
 Where the two movements intersecting run,  
 And there begin to revel in the art 10  
 Of that Workmaster, who doth love it so  
 Within Himself, His eyes ne'er from it part.  
 See how from thence the path oblique doth go  
 Of that great circle which the stars doth bear  
 To satisfy the world that seeks to know. 15

which they ought to recover to Christendom by a new crusade, or as the starting-point of the Gospel record.

<sup>142</sup> The prophecy is of the nature of an echo of that of the Veltro of *H. i. i. 101*, and of the vision of *Purg. xxxii.*, and refers probably to the death of Boniface VIII. in 1303, as the great corrupter of the Papacy. Possibly there may be an expression of a hope not quite extinguished even by Henry VII.'s death.

<sup>148</sup> The theology of the poet is an echo of that of *John i. 3-10; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2*; as also of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. The Primal Might, *sc.* the Father, created the universe through the agency of the Son. The ove of which he speaks is the Spirit that "proceeded from the Father and the Son." To contemplate this is to "taste" something of the Divine perfection, and to this the reader is invited to uplift himself.

<sup>9</sup> The two motions which intersect are those of the apparent diurnal motion from east to west, and that of the sun and the planets on the ecliptic, and the

And if their path did not thus wind and veer,  
 Much of Heaven's virtue would be spent in vain,  
 And every power below would feel death near.  
 And should it distance more or less attain  
 From the straight line, then much were incomplete,<sup>20</sup>  
 Above, below, throughout the world's domain.  
 Now, Reader, sit thou still upon thy seat,  
 Musing o'er that which doth full meal precede,  
 If thou would'st rather joy than tedium meet.  
 I serve the meal; thyself from henceforth feed;<sup>25</sup>  
 Because the subject whereof now I write  
 My whole attention for itself will need.  
 The minister of Nature, chief in might,  
 Who on the world imprints Heaven's virtue great,  
 And measures time's succession with its light,<sup>30</sup>  
 Arriving at the point I named of late,  
 Was circling forward, in the spires whereon  
 Each hour it doth to us approximate;  
 And I was with him; yet had knowledge none  
 Of that ascent, except as one doth know,<sup>35</sup>  
 Just as it comes, the thought he lighteth on.

point of intersection is that of the vernal equinox, which is assumed, as in *H.* l. 38, as near the date of the poem.

<sup>16</sup> The thought is like that of Hooker, *E. P.* i. 3, 2. If the relation of the ecliptic to the equator were other than it is, seasons and climates and stellar influences would be thrown into confusion, and life would pass into death, and the Divine purpose would be frustrated (*Conv.* ii. 15). Virtue and potency are distinguished from each other, as, in the terminology of Aristotle, the form and the matter.

<sup>22</sup> The bench on which the reader sits is either that on which the student sits at his desk, or, as in the metaphor of *Conv.* i. 1, the guest at the banquet. The "foretaste" of l. 23 rather points to the latter. We note in l. 27 Dante's consciousness of his calling as the prophet-poet of science as well as theology. Seldom, perhaps, has any one fulfilled (looking to his environment) so entirely as he did, Dr. Westcott's description of the "perfect theologian" as one who "would require to be a perfect scholar, a perfect physicist, and a perfect philosopher" (Paper on *Theological Examinations*).

<sup>28</sup> We pass to the sphere of the greater light that rules the day, quickens the world with its heat, and with its light gives the measurement of time. And the season is that from which the sun rises earlier every day, *sc.* the vernal equinox (l. 33), the sun being in Aries. The ascent, as before (*C.* ii. 23, v. 93), had been instantaneous, as are the movements of thought. In this he was in accord with Aquinas, who discusses the question whether the saints in heaven move in time, and answers it in the affirmative; the time, however,

'Tis Beatricè who doth guide us so  
 From good to better thus immediately,  
 Time can no measure of her movements show.  
 How lustrous must have been her brilliancy 40  
 Within the sun's bright sphere, to which I came,  
 By light, and not by hue, seen vividly!  
 Though help from art, use, genius I should claim,  
 I could not others to conceive it teach:  
 Let them believe, and long to see the same. 45  
 And if our thoughts are poor, and dull our speech  
 For such high theme, no wonder need there be,  
 For ne'er beyond the sun man's eye might reach.  
 Such was e'en there the fourth great family  
 Of the great Sire who doth its thirst allay, 50  
 Showing what "Son" and "Spirit" signify.  
 Then Beatricè spake: "Give thanks, I say,  
 Give thanks unto the Sun of Angels, who  
 To this, the Sun of Sense, hath led thy way."  
 No heart of man did e'er itself subdue 55  
 To worship God in self-surrendering fear,  
 With loyalty of will so promptly true,  
 As I did when those words fell on mine ear;  
 And so my love in Him was fixed awhile,  
 E'en Beatrice, eclipsed, no more seemed near. 60  
 She was not wroth thereat, but so did smile,  
 That the bright glory of her laughing eyes  
 Did my one thought to many things beguile.

being imperceptible on account of its extreme, infinitesimal brevity (*Summ.* iii. *Supp.* 84, 3).

<sup>42</sup> The souls in the sun, those of the great theologians, are visible, not by features, or even by colour, but only by a brightness which was greater than that of the body of the sun, and words were wanting to describe that brightness.

<sup>51</sup> The two verbs imply the Catholic doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal procession of the Spirit, the Father being Himself the "Sun of Angels," and standing in the same relation to the other two Divine Persons as the sun does to the light and heat which issue from it (*Conv.* iii. 12).

<sup>60</sup> The adoring gaze is, as it were, an anticipation of the beatific vision and the highest object of human love. Even Beatrice in her idealised character, as impersonating Heavenly Wisdom, suffers a temporary eclipse. The

More lights I saw in life and triumph rise,  
 And, making us their centre, wreath us round; 65  
 Less bright their look than sweet their melodies.  
 So oft see we Latona's daughter crowned,  
 And halo spread, when misty is the air,  
 So that it keeps the zone wherewith she's bound.  
 In Heaven's high court, whence hither I repair, 70  
 Are many gems so beautiful and bright,  
 They may not from that realm pass elsewhere.  
 Such was the song of those thus clothed with light  
 Who takes not wings that he may thither fly,  
 May wait until the dumb bring news aright. 75  
 Then, with sweet songs, those burning suns on high  
 Around us wheeled three times in measure due,  
 As round fixed poles the stars move equably.  
 Dames in unfinished dance I seemed to view,  
 Who pause awhile, in silence giving heed, 80  
 Till they have learnt the new notes through and  
 through;  
 And within one I heard thus: "When indeed  
 The ray of grace, by which is kindled love,  
 True love, which still, in loving, love doth breed,

human consciousness, which had been for a moment one with God, is restored to its perception of the plurality of creation by her smile.

67 The lunar halo seems to have been a special object of Dante's contemplation (*Purg.* xxix. 78).

72 The jewels of the treasury of heaven are like those of a king's regalia on earth, which may not be taken out of his kingdom, and such was the song of the blessed spirits in the sun. He who does not soar thither in heart and mind may as well look for speech from the dumb as expect the translation of the untranslatable. One feels in writing the words that they apply to those who follow in Dante's footsteps as well as to himself.

77 The threefold circling may be connected with the sacredness of the number as a symbol of the Trinity, or may represent the influence of the Masters of those who know on memory, intellect, and will.

79 The image reads like a reminiscence of Dante's youthful days, when he watched the movements of the fair dames of Florence as they danced, halting during a pause in the music to catch up the time of a new melody, to which they then adapted their rhythmic motion. Comp. *Purg.* xxviii. 53, xxxi. 132.

82 The speaker is identified in line 99 with Thomas Aquinas. He reads, without a word spoken, the desire that is in Dante's heart, and to gratify that desire is as natural for the spirits that glow with Divine love as for water to flow downwards to the sea. Its very presence is a proof that it shall be satis-

In thee shall shine all former light above, 85  
 So that it guide thee on that ladder high,  
 Whence who descends again must upward move,  
 Who to thy thirst should from his cup deny  
 The wine to quench it, knows not liberty,  
 But is like streams that far from ocean die. 90  
 Thou would'st fain know what kind of plants they be,  
 Thus garlanded, encompassing with praise  
 The Lady fair who for Heaven strengtheneth thee.  
 I with the flock of holy lambs did graze  
 Which Dominic along a pathway led, 95  
 Where well he fattens who ne'er vainly strays;  
 Near on the right is he who was my head,  
 Master and brother, Albert of Cologne;  
 And I am Thomas, in Aquino bred.  
 If 'tis thy wish the others should be shown, 100  
 Follow the words I speak with wandering eyes  
 Along the blessed wreath in order thrown.

fied. To be in Paradise, to taste of eternal life, is the foretaste and pledge of ultimate fruition. The theologians gather round Beatrice, for she represents Wisdom, and wisdom is inseparable from a true theology.

<sup>96</sup> The condition of all growth in the knowledge of Divine things is the soul's withdrawal from the vanities of earth.

<sup>98</sup> Albert of Cologne (*b.* 1193) was a student at Pavia, and moved by a sermon of Giaordano, who succeeded Dominic as General of the Dominican or Preaching Friars, joined the Order in 1223. In 1244 he was at Cologne and had St. Thomas as a pupil. With him he went to Paris in 1248, was elected Provincial of the Order in 1254, and Bishop of Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 1260, and died at Cologne in 1280. In the list of schoolmen he stands as the *Doctor Universalis*. It is probable that Dante had been at Cologne, and may have heard of his fame both there and at Paris (*H.* xxiii. 63).

<sup>99</sup> Thomas, the *Doctor Angelicus*, *b.* 1227 at Roccasecca, near Monte Cassino, where he received his early education. Thence he went to Naples, where he joined the Dominican Order, and in 1244-48 was with Albert at Cologne and Paris. He was chosen as Master of the Students in the former city, but returned to Paris in 1252, and there became acquainted with Bonaventura. His abstract manner and habit of silent meditation led to his being known as the "dumbbox of Sicily" (Naples = one of the two Sicilies), but Albert prophesied that the bellowing of that ox would echo through the world. Later on we find him at Rome, and once again at Naples. He died on his way to the Council of Lyons in 1274, poisoned, as it was reported, by Charles of Anjou (*Purg.* xx. 69), and was canonised in 1323. Dante appears to have been in his latter years a profound student of his works, especially, as the numerous references in these notes will have shown, of the great *Summa Theologica*.



That other fire-flame from the smile doth rise  
 Of Gratian, who each sphere of Law's domain  
 So helped that he gives joy in Paradise. 105  
 The next from whom our choir doth beauty gain  
 That Peter was, who, like the widow poor,  
 His treasure gave the true Church to sustain.  
 The fifth light, shining with a beauty pure,  
 Breathes from such love that all the world below 110  
 Craves to have tidings of him true and sure.  
 Within it is the lofty mind, where so  
 Deep knowledge dwelt, that, if the truth be true,  
 Such insight ne'er a second rose to know.  
 Next may'st thou light of that bright taper view 115  
 Which, in the flesh, had fullest insight clear  
 Into the angels' life and office due :

<sup>104</sup> The special merit of Gratian, the canonist of Chiusi, was that he undertook the work of reconciling the civil and the canon law. His work, with the title of the *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, was written about 1150. He taught at Bologna, but is said to have been a monk at Chiassi, near Ravenna, and Dante may thus have had a local reason for giving prominence to his name.

<sup>107</sup> Peter the Lombard, *Magister Sententiarum*, was born *circ.* 1100 near Novara, was the son of poor parents, studied at Bologna and Paris, and died in 1164 as Bishop of the latter city. His four *Books of Sentences*, a compendium of the theology of Latin Christendom in the 12th century, became the basis of all works of a like character, notably of the *Summa* of Aquinas. The reference to the widow's mite of *Luke* xxi. 1-4 is from his preface, "*Cupientes aliquid de penuriâ ac tenuitate nostrâ cum pauperculâ in gazophylacium Domini mittere.*" The words that follow, "*Araua scandare, opus ultra vires nostras agere præsumpsimus,*" may well have been in Dante's mind as applicable to his own task.

<sup>109</sup> With the four schoolmen is joined Solomon. Dante answers the question much discussed in the Middle Ages, whether he had been saved, in the affirmative. An elaborate treatise, *Du Salut de Salomon*, will be found in Calmet, *Diction.* (art. *Salomon*). The theologians of the Greek Church, headed by Chrysostom, were mostly for a favourable judgment; Augustine and the Latin fathers for an adverse. So in the "Last Judgment" of Orcagna in the Strozzi Chapel in Florence and the Campo Santo at Pisa, Solomon appears as rising between the blessed and the lost, almost as if halting between two opinions as to his own destiny. The scale was probably turned in Dante's mind by the mystical interpretation of the *Song of Songs* in St. Bernard and Hugh of St. Victor. The "love" of l. 110 clearly refers to this.

<sup>113</sup> Instead of the name of Solomon we have the description of 1 *Kings* iii. 12, which afterwards (C. xiii. 34-111) becomes the starting-point of a long explanation.

<sup>115</sup> The pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who, in the traditions of Dante's time, was believed to have been Bishop of Paris, to have suffered martyrdom

And in that little flame that smileth here  
 Thou see'st of Christian times the advocate,  
 Whose Latin pen was to Augustine dear. 120  
 Now if thy mind's eye doth expatiate,  
 Following my praises on from light to light,  
 The eighth flame thou dost thirst to penetrate.  
 In vision of all Good there finds delight  
 That holy soul who maketh manifest 125  
 The cheating world to him who hears aright ;  
 The body whence 'twas hunted lies at rest  
 In Cieldauro, and from agony  
 And exile came it to this region blest.  
 Beyond see thou the burning breath-flame high 130  
 Of Isidore and Bede, and that Richard,  
 With whom in contemplation none might vie.

under Domitian, and to have written a treatise on the " Hierarchy of Angels " which Dante had clearly studied, and which he expounds in C. xxx. and in *Conv.* ii. 6. The writings ascribed to Dionysius belong probably to the 5th century.

119 Who is meant has been matter for conjecture. (1) Ambrose ; (2) Paulus Orosius, a priest of Tarragona, who wrote a compendium of universal history of the Bossuet type, *Adversus Paganos*, at the request of Augustine, as a companion volume to the *De Civitate Dei* ; and (3) Lactantius, chiefly known by his treatise *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. Of the three guesses, (2) seems most probable. Brunetto's *Trésor*, as far as its history was concerned, was largely based, as indeed was the ancient history of the *Commedia* (*H.* v. 58 n.), on Orosius. Dante names him with Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Cicero, Livy, as among his favourite authors (*V. E.* ii. 6). Butler suggests Victorinus, also a contemporary of Augustine, and mentioned by him as having translated Plato (*i.* p. 145, *ed. Ben.*) ; but there are no indications that Dante knew his writings, nor were they at any time as widely read as those of Orosius. Alfred translated the latter, with additions, into Anglo-Saxon.

125 All commentators agree that Boethius is meant. The strange vicissitudes of his life (*b.* 470)—high in favour with Theodoric ; Consul in 510 ; then suspected of plotting against his master ; imprisoned at Pavia and then tortured to death—might well point the moral of the vanity of earthly greatness. Dante names him (*Conv.* ii. 13) as one of his chief guides and comforters in the sorrow that fell on him after the death of Beatrice. The Church of St. Peter di Cieldauro (of the Golden Ceiling) at Pavia was his burial-place. The local traditions of that city have canonised him as St. Severino (*Gibb.* c. 39 ; *Milm. L. C.* i. 407-414). Boethius also, like Orosius, was translated by Alfred. It is not without interest to note that the same books fashioned the minds of the Florentine poet and the English king.

131 (1) Isidore, Bishop of Seville (*d.* 636), wrote an encyclopædic book under the title of *Origines seu Etymologiae*, a treatise *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, and another, *De Summo Bono*. His works were much studied in all

He from whom now turns to me thy regard,  
 Is of a soul the light so gravely wise,  
 It deemed the way to death both slow and hard. 135  
 There Sigier's light eternal meets thine eyes,  
 Who, lecturing in the street that's named of Straw,  
 Unpalatable truths did syllogise."

medieval universities. (2) Beda, known as the Venerable, the Monk of Jarrow, is best known by his *Ecclesiastical History*, but was also a voluminous writer on astronomy, chronology, and other subjects. The fact that the Italian poet places the English historian in Paradise at least falls in with the tradition that he had visited Oxford. Richard, the *Magnus Contemplator*, Prior of the monastery of St. Victor, was one of the great mystical writers of the 12th century (d. 1173). His treatises, *De statu interiori*, *Benjamin Minor*, *De preparatione animi ad contemplationem*, *Benjamin major*, *De gratia contemplationis*, present so many suggestive parallelisms with the *Comm. that Lub.* (pp. 227-257) has thought it worth while to devote thirty pages of his introduction to printing them in parallel columns. For Hugh of St. Victor see C. xii. 133. Here again the reverence shown for the two great writers of the great monastery at Paris falls in with the tradition that Dante had studied in that city.

136 Still more is this the case with Sigier. Here we have at once a local knowledge hardly likely to have been gained elsewhere, and an enthusiastic admiration for one of the least known of the schoolmen. The Street of Straw, *Rue du Fouarre*, or, in Petrarch's Latin (*Epist. de Sen ix. 1*), "*Fragosus straminum vicus*," near the Church of St. Julien le Pauvre and the Hôtel de Ville, was the Haymarket of Paris. There the students of the four nations of the Faculty of Arts—(1) France, which included the archbishoprics of Paris, Sens, Bourges, and Rheims, and also Italy and Spain; (2) England, which included Germany; (3) Normandy; (4) Picardy—met to hear their lectures, seated, in the absence of benches, on the bundles of straw which were ready to their hand (*Lacr.* pp. 4-25). The few facts known as to Sigier are that he was born in the early part of the 13th century near Courtray; that he was one of the first disciples of Robert Sorbonne, the founder of the college that bears his name; that he taught the philosophy of Aquinas; was Dean of Notre-Dame at Courtray, and was at Paris again in 1255. *Ozan.* (p. 320) quotes from a document of 1306 the fact that he left a legacy, before 1300, of books, chiefly the writings of Aquinas, for the poor students of the Sorbonne. On the other hand, he was accused of heresy in 1278 before the Dominican Inquisitor, Simon du Val, and acquitted. To that accusation Dante probably refers, not without a touch of fellow feeling, in the "*invidiosi veri*" of l. 138. Bart. (*V. D.* p. 218) quotes from an Italian paraphrase of the *Roman de la Rose* (published by Castels, Montpellier, 1881), recently discovered, the further statement that Sigier died, after great suffering, to which l. 135 probably refers (comp. *Purg.* xvi. 122), in Orvieto, so that Dante may possibly have met him in Italy as well as Paris. Aroux (p. 232) charges Sigier with following Averrhoes in teaching a pantheistic materialism, destructive of true thoughts of the personality of man and God, and cites Dante's praise of him as evidence of complicity. The suspicion which was roused against him drifted probably in this direction, but it will be remembered that he was acquitted, and that Dante puts his praises in the mouth of the great opponent of Averrhoes. He was said to have written a treatise with the title of *Impossibilia*, in which he at least stated the arguments that might be alleged for Atheism, and this was probably the

Then, like a clock, that calls us, as by law,  
 What time the Bride of God from sleep doth rise,<sup>140</sup>  
 With matin praise her Bridegroom's love to draw,  
 Where the one wheel upon the other flies,  
 Sounding "*Ting-ting, ting-ting*," with note so sweet  
 That souls attuned feel love's high ecstasies,  
 So saw I then that glorious circle fleet<sup>145</sup>  
 Around, and voice to voice make melody,  
 So rich that none may know it as complete  
 Save there, where joy endures eternally.

ground of the suspicion from which he suffered. It is interesting for English readers to remember that he must have been a contemporary of Roger Bacon's at Paris, and that he too was condemned as a heretic in 1278. He was released in 1292, and died at Oxford between that date and 1294 (*Charles*, pp. 37-41). It may be well to note, however, that Mr. Paget Toynbee, in a letter to the *Academy* (xxix. 328), gives evidence to prove that Sigier de Courtrai did not die till 1341 (the passage from the *Roman de la Rose* probably referring to him), and that Dante refers to Sigier of Brabant, who has been confounded with his namesake, and to whom the facts stated by Ozanam probably refer. Mr. Toynbee arrives at the conclusion that he was executed in Italy before 1300.

<sup>139</sup> The comparison with which the Canto ends seems drawn from one of the mediæval clocks, of which the Cathedrals of Strasburg and Wells furnish examples, and in which, as the clock struck the hours, figures came forth and wheeled round and round, as in a dance. Such a clock, calling to the *Matin* lauds, seemed to Dante the nearest approach to the movements of the twelve great students of divine things whom he had enumerated. Dante is said to have been the first writer who mentions a striking clock (*Penny Cycl. art. Horology*). Chaucer (*b.* 1328) mentions them as common in England. Speaking of the cock, he says—

"Full sickerer was his crowing in his loge,  
 As is a clock, or any abbey orloge."

The date of the Wells clock, made by a monk of Glastonbury (Peter Light-foot), is said to be the early part of the 14th century. I am indebted to a letter from Lord Grimthorpe, who ranks as an expert in these matters, for the following additional facts: that the invention of clocks of some kind driven by machinery is generally attributed to Pacificus, Archdeacon of Verona, in the 9th century, and also to Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II., who made a clock at Magdeburg in 996 when Archbishop of that city. One was made for Westminster Abbey in 1283, and another for St. Alban's in 1326. Of none of these, however, is it recorded that they had the circular moving figures which Dante describes, and which I find in our clock at Wells. For another reference to clocks see C. xxiv. 13-18. Froissart (*i.* p. 750) describes a clock of like structure at Dijon (1382). One was sent in 1232 by the Sultan of Egypt to the Emperor Frederick II.

*Life of St. Francis of Assisi, as told by Thomas Aquinas*

INSENSATE care, that haunts each mortal breast,  
 How inconclusive are those syllogisms  
 Which make thee flutter down to baser rest !  
 This man to law turns, that to aphorisms,  
 And one the priesthood takes with lower aim, 5  
 And one seeks power by force or by sophisms ;  
 One seeks the robber's, one the statesman's fame ;  
 One, whom the pleasures of the flesh ensnare,  
 Sinks back exhausted to inaction tame,  
 While I, set free from every clinging care, 10  
 With Beatricè in that Heaven on high  
 Received, so gloriously am welcomed there.  
 And then, when each to that point had passed by  
 O' the circle where he was before, he stayed,  
 As candle in its stand stays fixedly. 15  
 And from within that form, in light arrayed,  
 Who spake to me before, now seen more bright  
 With smiles and purer, words I heard conveyed :  
 " As I in His rays kindle into light,  
 So, looking on that light which is eterne, 20  
 What stirreth now thy thoughts I read aright.

<sup>1</sup> The opening words seem an echo of *Pers.* i. 1—

*" O curas hominum! O quantum est in rebus inane."*

The thought of the defective syllogisms that lead the mind to earthly things seems to rise in contrast with the true syllogisms of Sigier, C. x. 138. The term "aphorisms," the title of the great work of Hippocrates (*H.* iv. 143), is used with a technical precision for the studies with which Dante, as a member of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries, was familiar.

<sup>6</sup> The "sophisms" are probably those of the legists of Paris, such as William de Nogaret, who were the counsellors of Philip the Fair in his processes against Boniface VIII. and the Templars (*Purg.* xx. 85-93). So the poet contrasts the serenity of his sojourn in Paradise with the manifold "cares of this world" in which men were engaged below.

<sup>12</sup> The image of the clock (C. x. 139-144) is still before the poet's eyes, as the figures stop when the clock has done striking, each light as in its own candlestick.

<sup>19</sup> St. Thomas speaks again. He reads (as in C. x. 91) in the mirror of the divine knowledge the doubts that are in Dante's mind, and proceeds to solve them, after his manner, with a *distinguo*. The first, turning on C. x. 96,

Thou doubttest, and dost wish my speech should turn  
 To words so open and intelligent  
 That to thy sense it should be plain to learn  
 What, when I said 'he fattens well,' I meant, 25  
 And when I said 'no second e'er arose ;'  
 And here we must distinguish each intent.  
 The Providence,—which all things doth dispose  
 With such deep counsels that all mortal gaze  
 Is baffled ere to that great depth it goes— 30  
 That unto Him she loves might bend her ways  
 The Bride of Him who, with a bitter cry,  
 Espoused her with the blood we bless and praise,  
 In fuller peace, more steadfast loyalty,—  
 Her, for her good, with two high chiefs endowed, 35  
 That they on either side her guides might be.  
 The soul of one with love seraphic glowed;  
 The other by his wisdom on our earth  
 A splendour of cherubic glory showed.  
 Of one I'll speak ; for, if we tell the worth 40  
 Of one, 'tis true of both, whiche'er we take,  
 For to one end each laboured from his birth.  
 Between Tupino and the streams that break  
 From the hill chosen by Ubaldo blest,  
 A lofty mount a fertile slope doth make ; 45

leads to the history of the great Mendicant Orders and their founders, whom Providence had raised up (ll. 28-36) to guide the Church into true paths of peace and joy. Starting from the teaching of *Summ.* i. 63, 7, St. Francis represents the Seraphim, that excel in love ; St. Dominic, the Cherubim, that excel in knowledge. To praise one is to praise also the other ; but Aquinas, himself a Dominican, in the true spirit of brotherhood, prefers to tell the story of St. Francis. As we follow that story it will be well to remember that Dante had probably been with Giotto at Assisi, guiding him in his designs for the great Franciscan church there (*Lindsay*, ii. 28-48).

43 The Tupino, a stream which rises in the Apennines, and passing by Nocera and Foligno (memorable for the first edition of the *Commedia*, printed there in 1472), flows into the Tiber. The description in its opening, as throughout, gives evidence of direct local knowledge. The other stream is the Chiascio, flowing from a hill on which St. Ubaldo had lived as a hermit before he became Bishop of Gubbio. The hill is that known as Subasio, on the slope of which stands Assisi, equidistant from the two rivers just named. The road from Perugia to Assisi passes through the Porta Sole, and is exposed in winter to the cold blasts from the hills, and in summer to the scorching

Perugia's Sun-gate from that lofty crest  
 Feels heat and cold ; Nocer' and Gualdo pine  
 Behind it, by their heavy yoke opprest.  
 On this slope, where less steeply doth incline 50  
 The hill, was born into this world a sun,  
 Bright as this orb doth oft o'er Ganges shine.  
 Whence, naming this spot, let not any one  
 Call it ' Ascesi '—that were tame in sense ;—  
 As ' Orient ' doth its proper title run.  
 Such was his rise, nor was he far from thence, 55  
 When he began to make the wide earth share  
 Some comfort from his glorious excellence ;  
 For he, a youth, his father's wrath did dare  
 For maid, for whom not one of all the crowd,  
 As she were death, would pleasure's gates unbar. 60  
 And then before court spiritual he vowed  
*Et coram patre*—marriage-pledge to her,  
 And day by day more fervent love he showed.

reflection of the sun. Dante had obviously felt both extremes when he was at Assisi with Giotto. I can testify to the cold of the Porta Sole on a windy day in February. The "grievous yoke" of Nocera and Gualdo may refer to their oppression by the kings of Naples, or more probably by the Guelphs of Perugia. Benvenuto, however, takes the "yoke" as referring to the mountain ridge and the cold and storms which it brought on the two cities.

<sup>49</sup> After the full description of Assisi we have the birth of St. Francis (1182). Dante begins the life in almost the same terms as Thomas of Celano, "*Quasi sol oriens in mundo*." So Bonaventura sees in him the fulfilment of *Rev.* vii. 2. The "Ganges" may have been suggested by the claims of rhyme, but from Dante's geographical standpoint, as the eastern boundary of the land hemisphere, it marked the first region in which the sun's beams fell on the habitable world, its true birthplace. It may be, too, that he had heard from Marco Polo or other travellers of the glory of an Eastern dawn. *Comp. Purg.* ii. 5, xxvii. 4. Such a "day-spring from on high" had come upon those who were in darkness and the shadow of death, and Assisi (I keep in the text the old form, with its allusive meaning, used by Dante) had become the true Orient of Christendom.

<sup>55</sup> Francis, the son of Pietro di Bernardone, a merchant of Assisi, followed his father's calling in early life, was taken prisoner in a battle between the citizens of Assisi and those of Perugia, and on his release began to feel the calling to a higher life, which should reproduce the poverty and the lowliness of Christ. The call came to him as he heard *Matt.* x. read as the Gospel of the day in the church of the Portiuncula. For the bride whom he then chose, Poverty, from whom most men shrink as from death itself, he incurred his father's wrath, and in his presence, and in that of the Bishop of Assisi, solemnly renounced, as in his espousals with her, all worldly possessions. Giotto's frescoes in the church at Assisi, probably suggested by Dante him-

Of her first spouse bereaved, a thousand were,  
 And more, the years she lived, despised, obscure, 65  
 And, till he came, none did his suit prefer.  
 Nought it availed that she was found secure  
 With that Amyclas when the voice was heard  
 Which made the world great terror-pangs endure;  
 Nought it availed that she nor shrank nor feared, 70  
 So that, when Mary tarried yet below,  
 She on the Cross above with Christ appeared.  
 But lest I tell it too obscurely so,  
 By these two lovers, in my speech diffuse,  
 Thou Poverty and Francis now may'st know. 75  
 Their concord and their looks of joy profuse,  
 The love, the wonder, and the aspect sweet,  
 Made men in holy meditation muse;  
 So that the holy Bernard bared his feet,  
 The first to start, and for such peace so tried, 80  
 That slow he thought his pace, though it was fleet.  
 O wealth unknown, true good that doth abide!  
 Ægidius bared his feet, Sylvester too,  
 Following the Bridegroom, so they loved the Bride.  
 Then went that Father and that Master true 85  
 With that his Bride and that his family,  
 Who round their loins the lowly girdle drew;

self, perpetuate the memory of that marriage. The Latin phrase is introduced as part of the formula of the solemn covenant.

<sup>64</sup> The first husband of Poverty had been the Christ (*Luke ix. 58; 2 Cor. viii. 9*). The marriage with her second spouse, St. Francis, was in 1207.

<sup>68</sup> As elsewhere, memories of Lucan (v. 519-532) mingle with those of Scripture. Amyclas is the poor fisherman on the shore of the Adriatic who received Cæsar in his cottage, and, secure in his poverty, felt no touch of fear.

*"O vitæ tuta facultas  
 Pauperis angustique lares! O munera nondum  
 Intellecta Deum."*

Dante quotes the passage in *Conv. iv. 13*.

<sup>72</sup> The *Mater Dolorosa* stood by the cross, but as the Crucified One hung there, naked and bleeding, Poverty also was with Him.

<sup>87</sup> The joy of the bridegroom, and the bride thus strangely brought together, attracted others. Bernardo of Quintavalle was the first to join the Order; Ægidius, author of the *Verba Aurea* (*d. at Perugia, 1272*), the third. The



Nor was faint heart betrayed in downcast eye,  
 As being Pietro Bernardone's son,  
 Nor yet as one despised wondrously; 90  
 But like a king his stern intention  
 To Innocent he opened, who did give  
 The first seal to that new religion.  
 Then, when the race content as poor to live  
 Grew behind him, whose life, so high renowned, 95  
 Would, in Heaven's glory, higher songs receive,  
 With a new diadem once more was crowned  
 By Pope Honorius, from on high inspired,  
 This Archimandrite's purpose, holy found. 100  
 And after that, with martyr zeal untired,  
 He, in the presence of the Soldan proud  
 Preached Christ, and those whom His example  
 fired ;  
 And finding that that race no ripeness showed  
 For their conversion, not to toil in vain,  
 He to Italia's fields his labours vowed. 105

second, Piero, is not named. Sylvester, the fourth, had sold some stones to St. Francis for his new church, and when he saw him distributing the money which Bernardo had given for the poor, reminded him that he had not paid for them. Francis met his demand with a handful of money, and Sylvester went home, and before long offered himself as a member of the brotherhood.

<sup>65</sup> St. Francis went with his eleven disciples, and with the Rule of his Order, the *Magna charta paupertatis*, to Rome, and obtained the approval of Innocent III. The same word is used for the cord of the Order as in *H. xxvii. 92*. One may note, as a matter of local interest for Dante, that the Church of Santa Croce at Florence was connected with the Franciscan Order.

<sup>89</sup> Not without a natural sympathy, and possibly also with a reminiscence of Amyclas, Dante notes the kingly bearing of St. Francis before the Pope, in spite of his lowly origin and the scorn to which his rule of life exposed him.

<sup>97</sup> Honorius III. solemnly sanctioned the Order in 1223.

<sup>99</sup> Archimandrite=chief of a sheepfold, was the word used in the Greek Church for the head of a monastery. It had been used by Pope Leo the Great, and may have survived in some of the monasteries of Southern Italy (*Suicer. Thes. s. v.*).

<sup>100</sup> Dante follows the tradition that St. Francis, after sending forth his disciples two and two to preach the Gospel to the nations (1212), started for Acre, where he preached Christ to the Sultan. The whole series of events here related may be seen in the frescoes of the Franciscan convent at Orta, at Assisi, and in the Chapel of Santa Croce, Florence.

On the rough rock 'twixt Tiber's, Arno's, plain,  
 From Christ received he the last seal's impress,  
 Which he two years did in his limbs sustain.  
 When it pleased Him, who chose him thus to bless,  
 To lead him up the high reward to share 110  
 Which he had merited by lowliness,  
 Then to his brothers, each as rightful heir,  
 He gave in charge his lady-love most dear,  
 And bade them love her with a steadfast care ;  
 And from her breast that soul so high and clear 115  
 Would fain depart and to its kingdom turn,  
 Nor for his body sought another bier.  
 Think now what he was who the fame did earn  
 To be his comrade, and for Peter's barque  
 On the high seas the true path to discern. 120  
 And such was he, our honoured Patriarch ;  
 Wherefore, who follows him as he commands,  
 Him laden with rich treasures thou may'st mark.  
 But now his flock so eagerly demands  
 New food, that it, of sheer necessity, 125  
 In pastures widely different strays and stands.

106 The rock is that of Alvernia, where St. Francis founded an oratory in 1215, and where, according to tradition, two years before his death, in 1226, he received the *stigmata* as the crowning seal of his mission, concealing them from the eyes of men, so that they were scarcely known by any till after his death.

113 Poverty, as the lady he had loved and wedded, he left to the care of his brethren. From her bosom he departed to his reward, and desired no funeral honours but those which she could give him.

118 We are again reminded of Giotto, who painted his famous "Navicella" probably when he was at Rome in 1295-1300. Dante may have seen it either in his jubilee visit or in his later embassy (*Lindsay*, ii. 9). The mosaic from the painting, originally in the choir of the old basilica, is now seen in the portico of St. Peter's. The "patriarch" of whom Aquinas speaks is Dominic, the founder of his own Order.

124 The "new food" may be either the wealth, dignity, and fame which the degenerate Dominicans were seeking, or the new and more secular studies for which they were forsaking those by which their great teachers had risen to eminence. In the "milk" there is probably an allusion to 1 *Cor.* iii. 2 ; 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. The new pursuits of the Order had marred the simplicity and effectiveness of their work as preachers. There were some who retained the older and better spirit, but *quotusquisque reliquus?* Comp. Roger Bacon's complaint of a like degeneracy among both Dominicans and Franciscans (*Op. Tert.* c. 65).

# PARADISE

## CANTO XII

And as the more his sheep thus scattered lie,  
 And further from him wander to and fro,  
 With less milk come they for the fold's supply.  
 Some are there who, in fear of that loss, go 130  
 Back to their shepherd, but so few they be,  
 That little cloth would make them cowls, I trow.  
 Now, if my words are not obscure to thee,  
 If thine own ears have been to learn intent,  
 If what I said thou call'st to memory, 135  
 In part at least thy wish shall find content;  
 For thou shalt see the plant which thus decays,  
 Shalt see what he, the leather-girded, meant  
 By 'well he fattens who ne'er vainly strays.'"

## CANTO XIII

### *The Life of St. Dominic as told by St. Bonaventura*

As soon as that last word had spoken been  
 By that blest flame who gave it utterance,  
 That holy mill to wheel again was seen;  
 Nor did it wholly through one whirl advance,  
 Before another compassed it around, 5  
 With song to song conformed, and dance to dance,—  
 Song which above our Muse doth so redound,  
 Above our Sirens, in those organs sweet,  
 As primal ray above the ray's rebound.

<sup>139</sup> I take the readings *vedrai*, and not *vedra*; *correggier*, and not *corregger* (=correction). The Dominicans wore a leathern girdle, as distinguished from the "cord" of St. Francis. They were *correggieri* as the Franciscans were *cordeliers* (*H.* xxvii. 67). What had been said to Dante would explain the meaning of the words (*C.* x. 96) that had perplexed him.

<sup>5</sup> Another circle of twelve blessed spirits gathers round the first, Dante and Beatrice still remaining in the centre, and moves with rhythmic dance and song. So, the observer of nature notes, we see two rainbows (*Iris*=the messenger of *Juno*), one (by a bold transfer of imagery from sight to sound) the echo of the other. For the story of *Echo*, see *Met.* iii. 395. The forsaken nymph fades away in her sorrow, and nothing is left of her but her voice.

As oft our eyes through floating cloud-mists meet 10  
     Two rainbows parallel and like in hue,  
     When Juno bids her handmaid ply swift feet,  
 The outer from the inner born to view,  
     Like to the speech of that poor wandering one  
     Whom Love consumed as hot sun doth the dew; 15  
 And thus they lead man's thoughts forecasting on,  
     By reason of God's pact with Noah made,  
     That earth no more shall be with flood o'errun;  
 So of such roses bright as never fade  
     There circled round us those fair garlands twain, 20  
     The inner in the outer re-portrayed.  
 Now when the dance and all the festal strain,  
     Both of the music and the radiant flame,  
     Of joyous love-lights all at once refrain,  
 Instant and impulse for them all the same, 25  
     Just as the eyes, which, when the will invites,  
     Or shut or open with a single aim,  
 Then, from the heart of one of those new lights,  
     There came a voice which made me turn to see,  
     E'en as the star the needle's course incites. 30  
 And it began: "The love which shines in me  
     Draws me to name that other Leader great,  
     Through whom my Master gains such eulogy.

<sup>16</sup> The thought seems to be that when men see the rainbow they remember *Gen.* ix. 8-17, and have a forecast of better things than the plague of waters.

<sup>20</sup> The thought of the rose-garland of souls, of which we have the first fruits here, culminates in the grand vision of C. xxxi. 1-24.

<sup>30</sup> The allusion to the mariner's compass is worth noting, like the mention of the clock in C. x. 139, as showing Dante's interest in applied science. Marco Polo is said to have brought back a knowledge of the properties of the magnetic needle from Cathay. It is described by Guyot de Provins in a satiric poem called *La Bible* in 1190. On the other hand, Vincent de Beauvais and Cardinal de Vitry speak of it as a marvel which they had seen in the East, and there is no evidence of its having been used for nautical purposes. Guido Guinicelli, Dante's master (*Purg.* xxvi. 97), alludes to it in nearly the same terms as Dante (*Rime Ant.* p. 295). The fact that Roger Bacon dwells on it as a "*miraculum in parte notum*" (*Op. Min.* p. 383) indicates a possible source of Dante's knowledge (C. ii. 64-148 n.).

<sup>31</sup> The speaker is Bonaventura (d. 1274), General of the Franciscan Order who, in return for the story of St. Francis told by Aquinas, narrates

'Tis meet that each should share the other's fate,  
 That, as they fought together side by side, 35  
 Together we their fame should celebrate.  
 The host of Christ so dearly re-supplied  
 With armour, in the rear of its high sign  
 Was following, few and slow, by doubt sore tried,  
 When the great Emperor of the realm divine 40  
 Was moved for that imperilled band to care,  
 Nor for its merits, but through grace benign;  
 And help, as I have said, to His Spouse bare  
 By those two champions, through whose words  
 and deeds  
 The scattered people homeward 'gan repair. 45  
 In that fair clime whence zephyr soft proceeds  
 The young and tender leaves to open wide,  
 With which our Europe clothes its verdant meads,  
 Nor far off from the surgings of the tide,  
 Behind which, when its heat is long and great, 50  
 The sun at times from sight of all doth hide,

the life of St. Dominic. Both had fought together; both should be united in men's honour. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, appears in old Italian paintings, engaged in the act of propping up the falling edifice of the Church. Comp. l. 106.

38 The re-arming of the host of Christ is identical with their redemption and renewal. They had lost through sin the weapons of the armoury of light (*Eph.* vi. 11-17), and Christ came to equip His soldiers with them. The description that follows gives us Dante's view of the state of Western Christendom at the beginning of the 13th century—heresy rampant, epicurean unbelief creeping in (*H.* x. 32, 63 *u.*), prelates and priests tainted with simony (*H.* xix. 1-6) and leading corrupt lives (*H.* xv. 109-113), and the champions of the faith few and far between.

40 We note the recurrence of the name Emperor, used in *H.* i. 124. It appears once more in C. xxv. 41.

46 Spain is described as the region from which the zephyr blows. St. Dominic was born at Calaroga in Castile, near the sources of the Ebro and the Tagus (now Calahorra), about eighty miles from the shores of the Bay of Biscay. The "sometimes" is a note of accuracy. It was in the summer that the sun seemed, after its long journey from the east, to sink in the waters of the Atlantic beyond Calaroga. The description is perhaps not without a touch of symbolism. The Church was to be wakened out of the "winter of its discontent" by the Saint who came from the land of the zephyrs. Comp. a like analogy in C. xi. 54.

There Calaroga stands, the fortunate,  
 Beneath the shelter of the mighty shield,  
 Where lions subject are, and subjugate.  
 Therein the zealous lover was revealed 55  
 Of Christ's true faith, the athlete consecrate,  
 Kind to her friends, to those who hate her steeled.  
 His mind, when it the Maker did create,  
 Was with that living energy replete,  
 It made his mother prophet of his fate; 60  
 And soon as the espousals were complete,  
 Which at the font did him to true faith wed,  
 Where dower of blessing equal dower did meet,  
 The lady, who for him that promise said,  
 Saw in her dreams the issue wondrous rare, 65  
 Destined from him and from his heirs to spread.  
 And that the words his calling should declare,  
 A spirit went from hence the boy to name,  
 Named after Him, who all his soul did share.  
 He Dominic was called, and his the fame, 70  
 As of the tiller of the ground, whom Christ  
 Chose as His help His garden to reclaim.

<sup>53</sup> As in *H.* xvii. 55-75, Dante displays his knowledge of heraldry by describing the arms of Castile, in which two lions and two castles are quartered in normal fashion.

<sup>55</sup> The word for "lover" is the same as that used in *malam partem* of the giant who woos the harlot in *Purg.* xxxii. 155. Diez (p. 128) derives it from Germ. *treu*, the true servant or lover. Dominic *b.* 1170.

<sup>57</sup> Apparently an echo of *Æn.* vi. 854—

*"Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos."*

<sup>60</sup> The legend was that his mother dreamt that she was to give birth to a dog with a burning torch in its mouth; that, troubled by the vision, she went for comfort to the shrine of an earlier St. Dominic near her home, and on the birth of her son called him by the same name. A trace of the legend survived in the mediæval pun that the Dominicans were *Domini Canes*.

<sup>61</sup> The espousals of St. Francis were celebrated when he was of full age, with Poverty. Those of Dominic, as the great champion of the faith, from which he never swerved, were celebrated at his baptism.

<sup>64</sup> The godmother of Dominic also had her dream, and saw one star on the child's forehead, and another on the nape of his neck, in token that he was to illuminate both East and West (*Ben.*).

<sup>70</sup> The words probably refer to Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 16, 3), who gives the meaning of *Dominicus* as meaning "one who belongs altogether to the *Dominus*." The man Christ Jesus, he argues, is Himself the Lord, and

Servant and envoy was he seen of Christ ;  
 For the first love which in his soul found home,  
 Was for the first great counsel given by Christ.

75

Silent and wakeful oft in midnight's gloom,  
 He by his nurse was seen upon the ground,  
 As though he said, 'To this end have I come.'

O father! Felix both in fact and sound!

80

O mother! true Joanna in thy deed,  
 If that name means what in it men have found!  
 Not as men labour now, for worldly greed,  
 Following the Ostian, or Taddeo's fame,  
 But for that Manna which is food indeed,

therefore cannot be rightly called *Dominicus*, but his flesh may be called *caro dominica*.

<sup>71</sup> It is Dante's rule that Christ should never be combined with any other word as rhyme. Comp. C. xiv. 104, xix. 104, xxxii. 83. Like instances of the same word thrice repeated for the sake of emphasis are found in the *vidi* of C. xxx. 95 and in the *animenda* of *Purg.* xx. 65.

<sup>75</sup> The word "counsel" is used in its strict ethical sense, as contrasted with "precept" (*Summ.* i. 2. 188, 4), as not binding upon all men, and with special reference to the command of *Matt.* xix. 21 given to the rich young ruler. The Order of the Preachers, like that of the *Fratres Minores*, was to be an Order of Mendicants. In the traditions of the Saint's life, Dominic sold even his books that he might relieve the poor in a time of famine, and offered to sell himself that he might ransom a captive from the Moors.

<sup>77</sup> Often in his childhood the boy was found at midnight kneeling on the hard ground, and when his nurse remonstrated, answered in the words which Dante puts into his mouth.

<sup>79</sup> Dominic's father was Felix Guzman. Dante knows enough of Hebrew to give the etymology of Giovanni (Joannes = Jochanan = the Lord is gracious), but a Hebrew scholar would hardly have spoken in the half-doubting tone of l. 81. Comp. Witte, *D. F.* ii. 43. An interesting paper on *Immanuel and Dante* in *D. Gesell.* iii. 423-462 shows that Dante was acquainted with an eminent Jewish poet and scholar. Comp. C. vii. 1-3.

<sup>83</sup> The Ostian is Henry of Susa, Archbishop of Embrun, who was made Cardinal of Ostia in 1261 and died 1271. He wrote a commentary on the Decretals, and is here taken as the representative of those who gave themselves to such studies. Taddeo is named in most MS. of the *Conv.* (ii. 10) as having translated the *Ethics* of Aristotle into Italian. He is said to have been of Florence (or Bologna), to have been a student of Hippocrates and Galen, and a personal friend of Dante's (*Benv.*), and to have died in 1295. Dante's medical studies as a member of the Guild of Apothecaries would naturally bring him into contact with such a man (*H.* iv. 143), and he appears here as their representative, as the Ostian is of Canon Law. The name appears as a surname in *Vill.* xii. 18. Some of the older commentators, however, identify him with Taddeo Pepoli, a jurisconsult of Bologna, and therefore grouped with the Ostian. In either case, what is meant is that Dominic abandoned secular studies for the true "manna" of heavenly wisdom.

In little time great doctor he became, 85  
 So that he gave himself to tend the vine,  
 Which withers if the dresser merits blame;  
 And from the See, less now than then benign  
 To the honest poor, not through its own offence,  
 But his who sits there in degenerate line; 90  
 Not that he might with payment full dispense,  
 Nor yet reversion of first vacant see,  
 Nor tithes, which are of God's own poor the pence,  
 Did he demand, but only liberty  
 Against the erring world for that seed true 95  
 To fight, whose plants twice twelve encompass thee.  
 With will and doctrine then himself he threw  
 In Apostolic office to proceed,  
 Like torrent which its streams from high source  
 drew;  
 And so upon the heretics' false breed 100  
 He fiercely swept, most vehemently there,  
 Where rebel will did most his course impede.

<sup>88</sup> The words imply a survey, almost a visitation, of the Church as the vineyard of the Lord (*Isai.* v. 4; *Jer.* ii. 21; *Matt.* xx. 1-16). It is noticeable that the same word is used here for the withering of the vine as had been used in *H.* ii. 128 for the revival of drooping flowers, the whiteness being in one case that of the fading leaf, in the other of the opening blossom.

<sup>89</sup> The See is that of Rome; the degenerate occupant of that See at the date of Dante's vision was Boniface VIII.

<sup>92</sup> The three applications which are scornfully noted as commonly made to the Pope are (1) for a dispensation from full payment of what was due, either as the fulfilment of a contract or by way of restitution, so that there might be an abatement of 50 or even 66 per cent.; (2) the promise of appointment to the first bishopric or other dignity that might become vacant—a power largely exercised by Popes Boniface VIII. and Clement V. in the case of cathedrals and the like, even in England (*Wells Historical MSS.* pp. 75, 81); (3) an assignment, for their personal use, of the tithes which were rightfully the inheritance of the poor.

<sup>97</sup> The four and twenty plants are obviously (though most of the older commentators take them as the four and twenty elders in *Purg.* xxix. 82 for the canonical books of the Old Testament) the two circles of Dominican and Franciscan teachers by whom the poet is now surrounded.

<sup>98</sup> Dominic obtained the sanction of Innocent III. in 1215, and proceeded, with the sanction of Honorius III. in 1216, to the persecution of the Albigenses in Provence, and specially in Toulouse, calling in the secular arm of Simon de Montfort. For the horrors of that persecution see Milm. *L. C.* vi. 8-22. The watering of the Catholic garden points to the labours of the Dominican Order as preachers and theologians. Dominic himself died August 6, 1221.



Full many streams from him their waters bare  
 The garden Catholic to irrigate,  
 So that its plants more living might appear. 105  
 If such was one wheel of the car where late  
 The holy Church found stronghold to defend,  
 And proved in civil strife inviolate,  
 Then should thy spirit clearly apprehend  
 The goodness of the other, in whose cause 110  
 Thomas, ere I came, proved so kind a friend.  
 But now the wheel no more its circuit draws  
 O'er the same track, neglected and unloved;  
 And mould is seen where wine's crust won applause.  
 His brotherhood, that once straight onward moved 115  
 And in his footsteps trod, now turns so far  
 That what was foremost now is hindmost proved;  
 And soon it will be seen what harvests are  
 Of that bad culture gathered, when the tares  
 Shall mourn the sentence that the barn doth bar. 120

107 The chariot of the Church reminds us of the imagery of *Purg.* xxix.  
 107. Here, however, it is a two-wheeled chariot, and the two wheels are  
 Dominic and Francis and the Orders they respectively represented.

113 As Aquinas had noted the degeneracy of the Dominicans, so does  
 Bonaventura that of the Franciscans, which is described in four similitudes.  
 The track of the wheels of its highest point, *i.e.*, the life of its founder, is no  
 longer followed. The good wine has turned sour, and there is the mould of  
 decay instead of the crust of ripeness. The words are said to have been  
 proverbial, "Good wine shows crust, bad wine mould." The third com-  
 parison is that they place their heel where St. Francis and his companions  
 had placed the point of their feet, *i.e.*, their course was retrograde; the  
 fourth, that the tares have taken the place of the wheat.

120 The words probably refer to the events which, when Dante wrote,  
 were fresh in men's memories. In 1294 Celestine V. during his short  
 pontificate had endeavoured to heal the divisions between the "Spiritual"  
 Franciscans, who claimed to tread in the footsteps of their founder, and the  
 main body of the Order, by gathering the former into a new Order as the  
 Poor Hermits of Celestine. Boniface VIII. abolished the Order in 1302,  
 and persecuted its members as heretical. They were thus thrust out of the  
 Church, and as the "Fratricelli," taking the "*Everlasting Gospel*" of the  
 Abbot Joachim as their standard, became the *bête noire* of orthodox theo-  
 logians, and were condemned by two Bulls of John XXII. in 1317-18,  
 probably, *i.e.*, just before Dante wrote the *Paradiso*. They complained  
 that the ark of Christ's Church (this seems to me a more natural rendering  
 than the "store-chest" of Butler (comp. C. xx. 39), though there may be an  
 allusion to both meanings) had been taken from them (Milm. *L. C.* vii. 91,  
 345).

I say that one who, leaf by leaf, compares  
 Our book, will find some pages where 'tis writ—  
 'As I was wont to be, so life still fares;'  
 But not Casal' or Acquasparta it  
 Produces; when these men our law apply, 125  
 This narrowing rules, that doth, too lax, acquit.  
 Bonaventura's life and soul am I,  
 Of Bagnoregio, who each left-hand care  
 Placed ever far below his office high;  
 Illuminato, Augustine are there, 130  
 First of those poor bare-footed mendicants,  
 Who in their girdle-cord God's friendship share.  
 Hugh of St. Victor near them doth advance;  
 Peter Mangiador, and he of Spain,  
 Who through twelve volumes full of light descants; 135

122 The volume is the register of the Order, the leaves are the individual members.

125 Ubertino of Casale was the head of the Spiritual Franciscans, and as such enforced the rules of the Order with the extremest rigour. Matteo, Cardinal of Acquasparta, and General of the Order, took a more liberal view, and, from Dante's point of view, encouraged a dangerous laxity. The poet had probably seen him when he came to Florence in 1300 as a legate from Boniface VIII. (*Vill.* viii. 40. 49).

128 Assuming, as I do, the good faith of Dante, the list that follows has the interest of showing whom, among the Franciscans, he most delighted to honour. (1) Bonaventura himself, the *Doctor Seraphicus*, *b.* 1221 at Bagnoregio, near the lake of Bolsena, joined the Order 1243, General in 1256, Cardinal and Bishop of Albano in 1272, *d.* at Lyons 1274, canonised by Sixtus V. in 1482. As the epithet attached to his name implies, Bonaventura represented the emotional, mystical side of mediæval thought, rather than the logical. He lectured at Paris on the *Sentences* of Lombard. Aquinas, on finding him writing the *Life of St. Francis*, is said to have exclaimed, "*Sinamus sanctum de sancto scribere.*" For "left-hand" see *Prov.* iii. 16.

131 Illuminatus of Rieti was one of the earliest followers of St. Francis, and went with him to Egypt. Augustine was another. It is related of him that being ill at the time of St. Francis's death, he called out and begged the Saint to wait for him and then fell asleep.

134 Hugh of St. Victor, *b.* 1097 at Ypres (?) or Blankenberg (?), entered the monastery of Hamersleben and then removed to that of St. Victor at Paris, from which he takes his name. Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 2. 5, 1) speaks in the highest terms of his writings (*De Sacramentis* and others) which fill three folio volumes. Pietro Mangiador (*the Eater*; was he so called as a *helluo librorum*?), *b.* at Troyes in Champagne, was Chancellor of the University of Paris in 1164, and *d.* 1179 in the monastery of St. Victor. Peter of Spain (*i.e.*, of Lisbon), *b.* 1226, first a physician, then a priest, Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum, and elected to the Papacy as John XXI. in 1276 (*d.* 1277), is noticeable as the only Pope whom Dante places in

Nathan the seer; the Metropolitan,  
 Chrysostom; Anselm, and Donatus too,  
 Who our first art to teach did not disdain;  
 Rabanus too is there, and, full in view,  
 Shines the Calabrian Abbot Joachim, 140  
 Whom the prophetic spirit did imbue.  
 To celebrate so great a paladin  
 I was stirred up by that warm courtesy  
 Of brother Thomas, backed by words that win,  
 And with me too was stirred this company." 145

Paradise. The twelve books of l. 136 were on Logic. The famous "*Barbara, celarent*," is ascribed to him (*Phil.*).

<sup>137</sup> By a strange grouping, for which it is difficult to give any satisfactory explanation, we pass to the more famous names of the prophet who rebuked David, the Patriarch who was exiled for rebuking the Empress Eudoxia, and the Archbishop who was exiled for rebuking William Rufus (was this the link that connected them together in Dante's mind?), Donatus, who is only known as the friend of St. Jerome and the author of the Latin Grammar used in all mediæval schools, so that a "Donat" became a synonym for a lesson-book. Here we may perhaps allow something for the imperative urgency of rhyme.

<sup>139</sup> Rabanus Maurus, *b.* at Mayence 776, and trained in the Abbey of Fulda, became Abbot in 822 and Archbishop of Mayence in 847, *d.* 856. He was the pupil of Alcuin, the master of Walafrid Strabo, wrote many commentaries on Scripture, and other works, historical and linguistic, after the manner of the time. One may perhaps speak of him as the Beda of Germany. Curiously enough all the early commentaries on the *Commedia* speak of him as Beda's brother.

<sup>140</sup> The strange list ends with the Abbot Joachim of the Cistercian monastery of Flora in Calabria (*b.* 1130). He was conspicuous as a commentator on the Apocalypse, predicting the coming of Antichrist in 1260. He was said to have foretold the failure of the third crusade to Richard I. and Philip II. on the ground that the time had not yet come. After his death he was on the one side received as a saint and prophet, inaugurating the new period of the Church's history, in which she was to be under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, and, on the other, denounced as a heretic. A book known as the *Everlasting Gospel*, and believed to embody his revelations, was the rallying-point of the seceding Spiritual Franciscans known as the Fraticelli, and as such was condemned, explicitly or implicitly, by Boniface VIII. Dante without being prepared *jurare in verba magistri* clearly sympathised with him, probably all the more because he had been so condemned (*Milm. L. C.* vii. 347). It is noticeable, as pointing probably to Dante's influence with the Order, that the stricter Franciscans appear after his death as strong Ghibellines (*ibid.* vii. 378).

*The Mysteries of Human Birth and of the Incarnation—The  
Wisdom of Solomon*

LET him imagine, who to know doth long  
 That which I saw, and let the picture stay  
 While I am speaking, fixed as mountain strong,  
 Stars ten and five, which in the heavens display,  
 In different regions, light so wondrous clear 5  
 That densest air is conquered by its ray;  
 Let him imagine then the Wain appear,  
 For which our heaven sufficeth day and night,  
 So that to turn its pole it fails not there;  
 Imagine then the horn with opening bright, 10  
 That from the point starts of that axle-tree  
 Round which the primal wheel revolves aright,  
 Had made two signs in Heaven for man to see,  
 Like that which Minos' daughter made of old,  
 Then when she felt death's chill and ceased to be; 15  
 And each of them round each its rays to fold.  
 And both go whirling onward in such mode  
 That one went first, the other, following, rolled;  
 Then will some shadow faint to him be showed  
 Of that true constellation, and the dance 20  
 Twofold that circled round me where I stood;  
 For it excels all wonted circumstance,  
 Far as outspeeds Chiana's sluggish flow  
 The highest heaven's revolving radiance.

<sup>1</sup> The mystic dance of the two companies of saints is described in one of Dante's most elaborate displays of astronomical knowledge. Take fifteen stars of the first magnitude (the exact number of such stars in the Ptolemaic register), the Wain or Great Bear with its seven stars, that never leave the northern hemisphere, the two bright stars at the base of Ursa Minor (here pictured as a horn), which begins from the pole-star, the point of the axis round which the *Primum Mobile* revolves; picture these arranged in two concentric circles, as in the constellation of Ariadne, whose crown of flowers was turned by Bacchus into a group of stars (the *Gnosia corona* of *Georg.* i. 222; *Met.* viii. 174-182), revolving in the same direction, and then we shall have a picture like that which met Dante's gaze as he looked on the two companies of theologians.

<sup>23</sup> The Chiana (*H.* xxix. 47), now turned into a canal, flows towards the Northern Arno near Arezzo. In Dante's time its course was southward

No Pæan nor "Io Bacche" sang they so, 25  
 But Persons Three who in one Nature shine,  
 And in one Person that in manhood show.  
 The song and dance each measured out its line,  
 And then those holy lights to us gave heed,  
 Joy growing, as they task with task combine. 30  
 At last the hush of saints in will agreed  
 Was broken by the light from which I knew  
 Of God's poor saint the wondrous life and deed.  
 It said: "One sheaf being threshed in measure due,  
 Now that the garner hath received the grain, 35  
 Love leads me on to thresh the other too.  
 Thou deem'st that in the breast from which was ta'en  
 The rib to form that cheek so wondrous fair,  
 Whose tasting wrought the world such bitter pain,  
 And in that other, pierced by the spear, 40  
 Which past and future so did satisfy,  
 That it outweighs all guilt that man doth bear,  
 Whate'er of light in our humanity  
 Is possible, was poured on each of those  
 By Him who fashioned both so gloriously. 45  
 And so thy gaze perplexèd wonder shows,  
 Because I said that ne'er a second yet  
 Was like the good that fifth light did enclose.

and it flowed into the Tiber near Orvieto. As the most sluggish of Italian rivers, it is contrasted with the velocity of the *Primum Mobile*. As this surpassed that, so did the brightness of the constellation which Dante saw surpass any imagined grouping of the stars of heaven. And the hymn they sang was not such as had been heard in the festivals of Bacchus or Apollo, which the name of Ariadne suggested, but praised the ever blessed Three in One and One in Three. Was Dante thinking of the *Quicumque vult* as sung in Paradise, and as summing up the teaching of Aquinas and Bonaventura, or did his thoughts rest on the more familiar *Gloria Patri*?

<sup>42</sup> Aquinas resumes his teaching as the *Ductor Dubitantium*. The history of the Franciscans had explained C. x. 96. There remains the difficulty connected with C. x. 114. How could it be said that Solomon was the wisest of all men? What was to be said of Adam (l. 37) before his fall, and of the Christ (l. 40), each of whom is described in his relation to the great work of redemption?

<sup>41</sup> The term "satisfy" is used in its strictly scholastic sense, as in Anselm's theory of satisfaction in the *Cur Deus Homo*?

Now on mine answer let thine eyes be set,  
 And thou wilt see thy thought and my reply 50  
 Fit true, as centre with its circle met.  
 That which dies not, and that too which may die,  
 Are but the radiance of that Thought Supreme  
 Which, in His love, our Sire begets on high;  
 So that the living Light which forth doth stream 55  
 From His effulgence, and ne'er from it strays,  
 Nor from the Love which is Triune with them,  
 Through its own goodness gathers all its rays,  
 As though reflected, in nine substances,  
 While in Itself for ever One it stays, 60  
 Thence to the lowest powers pours effluences,  
 Downward from act to act, and so doth end,  
 That all its works are brief contingencies:  
 I by these things contingent comprehend  
 All things created which the high heavens frame, 65  
 With or without seed, as their way they wend.

<sup>51</sup> The two truths, that the highest illumination possible for human nature was found in the first Adam before his fall, and in the second Adam, and that there was none like Solomon for wisdom, will be found to be in perfect harmony.

<sup>52</sup> We enter on the highest regions of scholastic theology. All beings, immortal, like angels, or mortal, like men, are but rays of the Divine Idea, *i.e.*, the Word, in St. John's sense, which the Father, in His love, eternally begets (*Summ.* i. 34, 3), and that Word, as the true Light of the world, is never parted from Him or from the Love, *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit, who completes the Divine Trinity.

<sup>59</sup> The readings vary between *nuove* and *nove*, of which the last is best supported; and the thought is that the Divine Light imparts itself, still remaining One, to the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy, who are the movers of the spheres (*C.* xxix. 142-145; *Conv.* ii. 6, iii. 14). From them it passes downwards to the "ultimate potencies," *i.e.*, the concrete material beings who are seen on earth (*Summ.* i. 41, 5). Its products in this lower sphere are, in scholastic language, "contingencies," varying in qualities and degrees: not the work of chance, but of Divine power working through the heavens, and produced either from seeds which contain the germ of life or by spontaneous generation. In them, therefore, the Light of the Idea, *i.e.*, of the Divine Word, shines forth in varying measure. Hence the "diversity of gifts," seen alike in the fruits of the earth and in the minds of men (*Summ.* i. 115, 6; *Conv.* iii. 7). Assume a perfect recipient (the "wax" of l. 67) and a perfect heaven, and then the light would shine in its perfect brightness. But it is not so. Nature fails (*Arist. Probl.* x. 44; *Phys.* ii. 8), as the artist fails whose hand is unequal to his conceptions (*Hooker, E. P.* i. 3, 3). If the creative action of the Divine Love, however, is immediate, then the result is absolute, and this was the case (1) in

Their wax-like stuff, and that which moulds the same,  
Are not alike in all, and, this being so,  
The ideal stamp they more or less proclaim;  
And thus it comes that on the same stock grow, 70  
In varying kind, or worse or better fruit,  
And ye are born with minds that diverse show.  
If that same wax should quite exactly suit,  
And did the Heaven's high virtue never fail,  
Then nothing would the seal's bright stamp dis-  
pute; 75  
But Nature ever gives it weak and frail,  
E'en as the artist works who hath the skill  
Of art, and hands that, trembling, nought avail.  
If then the burning Love that worketh still 80  
Clear view of that first Virtue should assign,  
Then all perfection doth the impress fill.  
So once the earth was wrought to temper fine,  
For highest animal perfection meet;  
So was the Virgin for her birth divine.  
So I thy judgment with approval greet, 85  
That human nature ne'er was, nor will be,  
Like that which had in those two forms its seat.  
Now if no further I my way should see,  
'How then to him was never equal known?'  
So would thy questioning words proceed from 90  
thee.  
But that the yet unseen may now be shown,  
Think who he was, and what his motive too,  
Who to his prayers the answer 'Ask thou' won.

the creation of the world, which was pronounced "very good" (*Gen.* i. 32), and in the incarnation of the Word. So far Dante had been right. Solomon was inferior both to Adam and to Christ.

<sup>91</sup> The doubt is solved after the manner of Aquinas by a *distinguo*. Solomon had asked for wisdom, not absolutely, but as a king, that he might govern wisely (1 *Kings* iii. 5-9). In contrast with that high knowledge Dante mentions the chief questions of the schools which were most remote from practice. How many are the angelic movers of the spheres? Can a necessary conclusion follow from premisses of which one is necessary and the other contingent (*Arist. Anal. Pr.* i. 16)? Can motion, and there-

Not so I've spoken as to hide from view  
 That he was king who asked for wisdom's dower, 95  
 That a king's duty he might ably do;  
 'Twas not to know the number or the power  
 Of these high spheres, nor if *necesse* wed  
 With thing contingent, e'er *necesse* bore;  
 Nor *si est dare primum motum* said, 100  
 Or if in semicircle there can be  
 Triangle other than right-angled made.  
 Hence, if thou note what things I've said to thee,  
 That peerless sight as kingly wisdom's seen,  
 On which my meaning's arrow lighteth free. 105  
 And if, clear-eyed, thou scan what 'rose' may mean,  
 Thou'lt see that it to kings alone referred,  
 Kings that are many, but few good, I ween.  
 With this distinction take what thou hast heard,  
 And thus it may accord with thy conceit 110  
 Of our first sire, and Him to us endeared;  
 And let this be as lead unto thy feet,  
 That thou, like wearied man, ply slower pace  
 When 'Yes' or 'No' thou blindly would'st re-  
 peat;  
 For he among the fools holds lowest place 115  
 Who, without due distinction, or denies,  
 Or else affirms, and this in either case;

fore the universe which moves, be treated as eternal, or must we postulate a First Cause, itself unmo- d, as the beginning of all motion? Can the angle in a semicircle be ever other than a right angle? It was not to such questions that the unequalled insight of Solomon applied itself.

<sup>106</sup> Another subtle *distinguo*. Aquinas had applied the word "rose" to Solomon, and this could apply only to those who are placed above others, *sc.* to kings. It was with them, therefore, and not with Adam or Christ, that Solomon had been compared. The reasoning seems to us almost a caricature of the method of Aquinas, but I see no ground for questioning the good faith of Dante in his use of it, any more than in the casuistic discussion of C. v.

<sup>112</sup> The scholar is taught by his experience of his own haste to be slow in affirming or denying when he sits in judgment on things too high for him. Haste in such matters is but a proof of unwisdom. Men may be swayed either by the opinion of the crowd around them or by their own prepossessions—what Bacon called the *eidōla fori* and the *eidōla spectūs*. To seek for truth without knowing the method of dialectics is to put forth on



Because it chances oft men's judgment flies  
 With speed o'er-quick towards the falsier part,  
 And self-love binds our understanding's eyes. 120  
 He more than vainly from the shore will start,  
 Since he returneth not as first he came,  
 Who angles for the truth yet fails in art;  
 And in the world, proofs open of the same,  
 Parmenides, Melissos, Brissos stand, 125  
 And many wanderers, more than I can name,  
 Sabellius and Arius, too, the band  
 Of fools, who were as swords to Scripture's sense,  
 To make its clear looks twist at their command.  
 Nor let men now with caution due dispense 130  
 In judging, as he does who ere the hour  
 Of ripeness counts the harvest's opulence.

the wide sea in search of fish without the art of the fisherman, and of this the philosophers who are named were instances.

<sup>125</sup> It is, to say the least, a noteworthy coincidence that two of these, Parmenides and Melissus, are named by Roger Bacon (*Op. Tert.* c. 39) in much the same way. The first was the founder of the Eleatic School of Greek philosophy (*A. circ.* B.C. 502). The error which Dante notes was probably that he accounted for the existence of the universe by the working of the two contrasted elements of fire as force and earth as matter, excluding the creative and disposing activity of God, and taught that matter was eternal. Melissus was of the same period and of the same school, probably a disciple of Parmenides, and carried his speculations, anticipating Berkeley, to the conclusion that the actual world of which the senses take cognisance has no real existence when contemplated by the reason. Brissos or Bryson, said to have been the disciple of Euclid or of Stilpo of Megara, was said to have occupied himself with the quadrature of the circle (*C.* xxxiii. 134). Of all these attempts to solve the mystery of the universe without revelation Dante affirms that "they knew not whither they went," did not see, *i.e.*, that they were drifting to Pantheism or Atheism. With them he classes Sabellius, who confounded the Persons of the Trinity in Unity, and Arius, who denied the divinity and eternity of the Person of the Son.

<sup>127</sup> The comparison may be either (1) that, like swords, they hacked and mutilated the fair face of truth, or (2) that they reflected that truth, as a sword reflects the features of a man, dimly and distortedly. Of these, (2) seems preferable.

<sup>130</sup> A warning like that of *C.* xix. 97, xx. 133, against haste in judging, partly an echo of *1 Cor.* iv. 5, partly of *Matt.* xiii. 29. The two examples of premature judgment are chosen as against hasty condemnation or hasty praise. We may condemn a character as wild and hard which will afterwards blossom into beauty. We may think that a man has almost finished his voyage across the sea of life, and yet he may at last make shipwreck. Was Dante thinking of himself in the first case, of Celestine V. or Brunetto Latini in the second? We are reminded of the words with which Bunyan

For I have seen, through winter's frost and shower,  
 The briar appear all stiff and hard to see,  
 'Then on its summit bear its roseate flower ; 135  
 And I have seen a ship drive fast and free  
 O'er the wide waves in safety all the way,  
 And at the harbour's entrance shipwrecked be.  
 Let not Dame Berta or Ser Martin say,  
 Seeing one man rob, another sacrifice, 140  
 They see the doom of God's great judgment-day ;  
 For one may fall, the other too may rise."

## CANTO XIV

*The Fifth Heaven, of Mars—The Starry Cross—The Souls of  
 Martyrs and Crusaders*

FROM rim to centre, centre to the rim,  
 The water moves itself in vessel round,  
 As struck from out or inside of the brim.  
 Within my thoughts dropt suddenly, I found  
 This that I speak of, when the glorious shade 5  
 Of great St. Thomas no more uttered sound,  
 Through the resemblance to my mind conveyed,  
 'Twixt his discourse and that of Beatrice,  
 Who after him thus her beginning made:

ends his *Pilgrim's Progress*: "I saw that there was a way to Hell from the gates of Heaven as well as from the City of Destruction."

<sup>139</sup> The two names are taken as among the most common to represent the self-confidence of the ignorant, the "unlearned" of 1 Cor. xiv. 16. "Martin" is used in the same way in *Conv.* i. 8. Such persons form their judgments from single acts without taking into account the infinite complexity of motives and influence. They see the robber, and condemn; they see the offering, and applaud. They do not take into account that the robber may repent at the last moment; that the offering may be that of a hypocrite, or a self-righteous formalist. The lesson which Dante draws is the old lesson "Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. iv. 5): never to despair, however low the sinner may have fallen; not to be high-minded, but fear, knowing that even the grey-haired saint may prove a wanderer from the fold.

<sup>1</sup> The words indicate the minute observer of phenomena (C. ii. 100-105) watching the vibrations of the water in a basin and endeavouring to discover the law which governs them. The voice of Aquinas came from the

"This man hath need, nor yet with voice applies 10  
 To tell it, no, nor even in his mind,  
 To reach the root where yet one more truth lies;  
 Tell if the light wherewith enflowered we find  
 Your substance will remain with you for aye  
 As now it is, while endless ages wind; 15  
 And if it so remain, then after say,  
 How, when once more ye visible are made,  
 It shall not vex your eyesight with its ray."  
 As now and then, by joy's excess betrayed,  
 They lift their voice who circling dance along, 20  
 And the whole game with greater mirth is played,  
 Thus at that prayer, so earnest and so strong,  
 The circles of the blessed showed new joy  
 In their quick whirling and their wondrous song.  
 Whoso at thought of dying feels annoy 25  
 To live above, be sure he doth not see  
 The eternal shower of gladness they enjoy.  
 The ever-living One and Two and Three,  
 The ever-reigning Three and Two and One,  
 Boundless Himself, bounds all things else that be—30  
 Three times to Him due praise by each was done,  
 Of those blest spirits, with such melody,  
 Full guerdon 'twere for all that merit won.

circumference to the centre; that of Beatrice from the centre to the circumference.

<sup>12</sup> Beatrice becomes the interpreter of another question in Dante's mind, as yet not uttered in words, scarcely even formulated in thought. Would the light which now hid form and features from Dante's gaze continue after the Resurrection and for ever? and if so, how could the eyes of the resurrection body look on them without injury? As in other instances, question and answer are both versified from Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 85, 1).

<sup>19</sup> The rejoicing of the souls in Paradise is likened to the dances, at once vocal and pantomimic, of Italy, in which every varying emotion found expression.

<sup>25</sup> The thought seems to rise out of the memory of what his own sorrow had been at the death of Beatrice (*Canz.* v. vi.). Had he rightly judged, he would have rejoiced instead of lamenting at the death of any whose life gave good grounds for hoping, as hers did, that they were meet for Paradise.

<sup>30</sup> An echo of *Purg.* xi. 1 and *Conv.* iv. 9. Looking to Dante's constant reference to the services of the Latin Church, the words were probably meant to refer to the *Ter-Sanctus*, or to the yet more familiar *Doxology*.

And in the light that shone most gloriously  
 In the near ring I heard as modest strain 35  
 As Gabriel's when to Mary he drew nigh,  
 Answer: "As long as with us shall remain  
 The joy of Paradise, so long our love  
 Such vesture radiant round us shall retain.  
 Its brightness doth our ardour's measure prove, 40  
 The ardour comes from vision, and that grows,  
 As it has grace its natural strength above.  
 And when re clothed with flesh our body shows  
 Glorious and holy, then our being's bliss  
 Will be more sweet as it completeness knows; 45  
 And so will grow and brighten in us this,  
 The light the Chief Good gives of His free grace,  
 The light by which we see Him as He is.  
 And thus that vision needs must grow apace,  
 Grow too the ardour kindled by that sight; 50  
 Grow too the brightness shed from it through space.  
 But as a coal that giveth flame and light,  
 Yet these by its white heat surpasseth so  
 That its own aspect still maintains its right,  
 So shall the glory that doth round us show 55  
 Yield in its radiance to the fleshly frame  
 Which now the earth hides sepulchred below;  
 Nor shall we wearied grow with that bright flame,  
 For all our body's organs will be strong  
 For every object that delights the same." 60

<sup>34</sup> The light which speaks is identified by C. x. 109 as the soul of Solomon, the author, not only of *Proverbs* or *Ecclesiastes*, but also of the *Song of Songs*, in which the mediæval mystics had seen a revelation of the joys of Paradise. Comp. *Purg.* xxx. 10. Possibly, also, as Butler suggests, Dante may have thought of him, as most mediæval scholars did, as the author of the *Book of Wisdom*.

<sup>37</sup> The answer is that the glory with which the saints are clothed comes from their love, and their love from the beatific vision, and their vision from the grace of God—"super-effluent grace," as Ken would have called it—added to the merit which each had gained by his personal holiness. It will, therefore, be eternal, and, in accordance with the doctrine of *H.* vi. 106, it will be increased when the soul is clothed again with its spiritual body. And that body will have organs of its own, stronger and more perfect than those of the natural body, and will therefore be able to bear what these shrink from.

So quick and eager in their burst of song,  
 With loud *Amen*, seemed each ring of the choirs,  
 They seemed for their dead bodies much to long;  
 Not for themselves alone were their desires,  
 Perchance, but mothers, fathers, others, dear, 65  
 Ere yet they shone among the eternal fires.  
 And lo! all round, with equal brightness clear,  
 A glory shone, the former light above,  
 As when the horizon's glow doth reappear.  
 And, as when early eve begins to move, 70  
 New stars are seen in the bright firmament,  
 And whether true or false we scarce can prove,  
 So then new forms of being did present  
 Themselves to me, and made an outer ring  
 That far beyond those other circles went. 75  
 O Holy Spirit's true illumining!  
 How sudden on mine eyes its burning light  
 So poured, that they shrank back in suffering!  
 But Beatrice then so wondrous bright  
 With smiles appeared, that with what else was seen, 80  
 My mind must leave it as beyond its might.  
 Anon mine eyes, restored to vision keen,  
 Looked up, and now I saw we were transferred,  
 I and my Lady, to bliss more serene.

62 The teaching of Solomon is confirmed by the "*Amen*" (Dante uses the popular *Amme*, still common in Tuscany, into which the Hebrew word had glided).

64 The perverse ingenuity of commentators has inferred from the absence of any relations except father and mother that he, for his part, did not desire to meet his wife in Paradise. My own conclusion is just the opposite. The other "dear ones," both here and in C. xvii. 55, seem to me expressly intended to include both her and her children.

70 A third circle gathers round the other two, but we are not told of whom it consists. They are probably brought in, as it were, to complete the triplicity of those who sing the praises of the Trinity in unity (l. 28). Readers of the *Christian Year* will be reminded by l. 71 of the lines

"Whoever saw . . .  
 Or, when the summer sun goes down,  
 The first soft star in Evening's crown  
 Light up her gleaming crest?"—*4th Sun. in Lent.*

This is the last vision in the sphere of the sun. From this—Beatrice increasing in beauty as she rises—they pass to the sphere of Mars, which is recog-

Well saw I we a higher clime had neared 85  
 By the full glowing smile of that bright star,  
 Which ruddier than its wont to me appeared.  
 With all my heart, and with the words that are  
 The same for all men, I made sacrifice,  
 Meet for that last new grace so passing rare. 90  
 Nor from my breast the glow had ceased to rise  
 Of that same holocaust, before I knew  
 That offering had found favour in God's eyes ;  
 For with such brightness and such roseate hue  
 Splendours I saw in two such radiant lines, 95  
 I cried, "O Elios, here thy work I view !"  
 As, marked by less and greater starry signs,  
 The Galaxy, the world's great poles between,  
 Perplexing sages, in its whiteness shines,  
 Thus constellate in depths of Mars' bright sheen, 100  
 Those rays the venerable sign did make,  
 Which, where four quadrants intersect, is seen.  
 Here skill and power 'neath memory's burden break,  
 For on that cross, all flashing, shone the Christ,  
 So that I know not what fit type to take ; 105

nised, as on earth, by its red light, and Dante offers directly the holocaust of his praise.

<sup>96</sup> The "Elios" has been the *crux* of commentators. Did Dante mean it for the Greek Helios (=Sun) or for the Hebrew Elion (=the Most High), or was it an echo from the "Eli, Eli," which he found in *Matt.* xxvii. 46? *C.* xxvi. 134-136 seems in favour of the last conjecture. He was, as we have seen, fond, as we should say, of "airing" his Hebrew (*C.* vii. 1-3; *H.* vii. 1).

<sup>99</sup> The Milky Way (*Met.* i. 168) was, with Dante, as with other mediæval students of science, one of the problems which he could not solve. In *Conv.* ii. 15 he enumerates the various thoughts that had gathered round it, from the story of Phaethon, and the Pythagorean view that the sun had once deviated from its course and left its pathway of brightness, to the popular belief which connected it somehow with St. James of Compostella. The lights which he saw formed a cross within the circumference of a circle, and he recognised the symbol of the Christ. It is noteworthy that in *Conv.* ii. 14 he describes a luminous cross as having appeared near Mars in Florence. Possibly this was the comet mentioned by *Vill.* viii. 48 as having appeared in September 1301 (*Butl.*). Popular superstition looked on it as presaging the coming of Charles of Valois. The cross, it will be noted, was after the Greek pattern, such as that with which early Byzantine and Italian art was familiar in the aureole of our Lord, as distinguishing Him from the saints.

But whoso takes his cross and follows Christ  
 Will pardon me for what I leave unsaid,  
 Seeing in that sheen the levin-flash of Christ.  
 From arm to arm, and from the foot to head,  
 Moved to and fro bright lights, and, as they  
 went, 110

Meeting and crossing, sparkling rays they shed.  
 So see we oft, in straight line now, now bent,  
 Now swift, now slow, in ever-changing mode,  
 The atoms small, of more or less extent,  
 Move in the ray which makes a shining road 115  
 Through shadows thick, where men, on screen or  
 fence

Their skill, and art, and labour have bestowed.  
 And as the lyre and harp, when duly tense  
 Their many strings, make pleasant harmony  
 For him who of each note has little sense, 120  
 So then the lights that there appeared to me  
 Around the cross melodious song did raise,  
 Which rapt me, though their hymn mine ears did  
 flee.

Well did I know it was of loftiest praise,  
 For unto me "Arise and conquer" came, 125  
 As understanding not, one hears a phrase.

<sup>106</sup> He who follows Christ will know His incomparable preciousness, and will, therefore, forgive the poet for not venturing on a comparison. As a rhyme unto itself, *Cristo* again stands in the original as in the translation. C. xii. 71-75, xix. 104-108, xxxii. 83-87.

<sup>109</sup> Along the four arms of the cross thus seen appear sparks of brightness thick as the dust motes which float in the ray that makes its way through a shutter or a screen. These, as already suggested in l. 106, are chiefly the souls of faithful Crusaders. The mingling of many voices answers to their multitude. There is a vague impression of something melodious, but neither words nor tune are heard distinctly. *Butl.* compares *Lucr.* ii. 115.

<sup>125</sup> The words, either in the imperative or indicative mood, are addressed to Christ. Analogy would lead us to expect either a quotation from Scripture or from some well-known anthem, but the nearest approaches to the former suggested by commentators (*Isai.* li. 9; *Rev.* v. 5) are sufficiently remote. I incline to *Ps.* lxxviii. 1, the proper Psalm for Whit-Sunday, as more probable. The sequence for the Thursday in Easter Week in the Sarum Missal, and probably therefore in that of the Italian churches in Dante's time, contains the words "*Resumptâ carne resurgit victor die in*

So much therewith enamoured I became,  
 That until then had not been anything  
 That with such pleasant bonds my strength  
 o'ercame.

Perhaps my words may have too bold a ring,  
 Seeming to slight the charm of those sweet eyes,  
 Rapt in whose gaze desire doth fold her wing ;

120

But who reflects that as we higher rise  
 Each living type of beauty charms us more,  
 And that my gaze was there turned otherwise,

125

He may excuse what 'gainst myself I score,  
 Myself excusing, and my truth confess ;  
 For joy supreme here oped not all its store,  
 For, as one mounts, it gains more power to bless.

*tertiâ.*" And preceding these are words which may have suggested the comparison of l. 118—

*" Nos quoque laxas aptemus fibras arte musicâ,  
 Voce sonorâ modificantes prosis neumata,  
 Voce satis tinnulâ."*

Political commentators, after their manner, read between the lines, and see in the words, as addressed to Dante, a command to "arise and conquer" in the strength which was hoped for from the appointment of Can Grande as Captain-General of the Ghibellines.

<sup>127</sup> No previous rapture had equalled that which the poet felt on hearing, though incompletely, the Resurrection Hymn. Did he seem, in saying this, to disparage the joy which came to him from the eyes of Beatrice? "No" is his answer, for he had not looked in those eyes since he came into the sphere of Mars. That holy joy was not yet opened to him; or, adopting another meaning for *dischiuso*, as in C. vii. 102, it was not *excluded*; nay, rather was implied, as being soon to coalesce with and form a part of it (C. xv. 32). What is the thought to be read between the lines? Possibly this, that the joy of the thought of the triumph of Christ's resurrection surpasses all previous joy in the contemplation of Divine Wisdom, till that Wisdom, in due course, takes that triumph as the subject-matter of its meditation.



*Cacciaguida—The good old Times of Florence*

A WILL benign, wherein we ever see  
 The love which breatheth rightly flow amain,  
 As base desire does in iniquity,  
 Imposed a silence on that sweet refrain,  
 And all the holy chords were hushed and still, 5  
 Which Heaven's right hand doth slacken or doth  
 strain.  
 How can our righteous prayers meet answer chill  
 From beings who in concord stayed the flow  
 Of song to breathe in me a prayerful will?  
 Well is it he should suffer endless woe 10  
 Who, for the love of thing that cannot last,  
 For ever of this love despoiled doth go.  
 As in clear heaven, by not a cloud o'ercast,  
 There shoots at times a sudden-kindled fire,  
 Rousing the eyes, till then set firm and fast, 15  
 And seems a star that doth new place desire,  
 Save that where it was seen to flash in sight  
 Not one is lost, while it doth soon expire;  
 So from the arm that stretched towards the right,  
 Unto that cross's foot, there moved a star 20  
 From out the constellation shining bright.  
 Nor strayed the gem beyond its radiant bar,  
 But sped along the central column's way,  
 As fire is seen through alabaster spar.  
 So pitying moved Anchises' soul, they say, 25  
 If we may credence give to that high *Musa*,  
 His son beholding in Elysian day.

<sup>1</sup> The heavenly souls were silent, but their very silence was a proof of their love, for they stopped their song to allow the poet to give utterance to his prayers. One who shut that love out for the sake of the lower love of perishable things might well be in his turn shut out from love, as the fit reward of his evil choice.

<sup>13</sup> The simile of a shooting star appears in Dante's two favourite poets (*Æn.* ii. 693; *Met.* ii. 321). Such a star appears moving along the right radius of the Greek Cross. It is, as the sequel shows, the soul of Cacciaguida,

" *O sanguis meus, O super infusa  
 Gratia Dei; sicut tibi, cui  
 Bis unquam Cæli janua reclusa?*" 30

Thus spake that light, and so I turned to see,  
 And then I to my Lady turned mine eyes  
 On either side, in sore perplexity;  
 For in her eyes a glowing smile did rise,  
 Such that I thought I plumbed the depth with  
 mine 35

Both of my grace and of my Paradise.  
 Then, joyous both to see and hear, the line  
 Which he began, the spirit carried on,  
 And spake of deep things I could not divine.  
 Not by his choice his words obscurely shone, 40  
 But of necessity; for e'en his thought  
 Had far beyond the grasp of mortal gone.

And when the bow of ardent love, o'erwrought,  
 Was slackened to the standard of our sense,  
 So that his speech now plainer meaning taught, 45  
 These were the first words that I heard from thence:

" Blessed be ever Thou, the One, the Three,  
 Who to my seed such bounty dost dispense!"  
 And then went on: " Long hunger, sweet to me,  
 That moved me as the volume great I read, 50  
 Wherein nor white nor dark e'er changed can be,

Dante's great ancestor, hastening to meet his descendant, as Anchises did to meet Æneas in the Elysian fields (*Æn.* vi. 684-691; *Purg.* v. 37).

<sup>29</sup> *2 Cor.* xii. 2-4 would seem to suggest that St. Paul had had a like privilege, but possibly Dante limited that vision to the earthly Paradise and to the third Heaven, beyond which he had now passed. In *H.* ii. 32 Dante where see *note*) speaks as if St. Paul's visit had been to the region of the east. Why does he put Latin into his great-grandfather's lips? Probably to indicate that at that period the "vulgar tongue" of modern Italian had not yet been formed. What men spoke was still, as in *V. E.* i. 10, Latin with variations. *Comp. C.* xvi. 33, where his words, though given in Italian, are said to have been spoken in a more archaic form.

<sup>35</sup> The phrase is almost an exact echo of that with which the first salute of Beatrice is described in *V. N. c.* 2. It was "*Qualis ab incepto.*"

<sup>39</sup> We are reminded of *2 Cor.* xii. 4. Line 47 suggests the thought that it was the close of a half-eucharistic, half-prophetic prayer. Reading the future in the mirror of divine knowledge, Cacciagnida had long known that

Thou hast, my son, within this glory fed,  
 This wherein now I speak to thee, through grace  
 Of her who for such flight thy wings hath sped.  
 Thou deem'st that I thine every thought can trace 55  
 In Him who is the First, as when we know  
 The five and six developed from the ace.  
 And therefore who I am and why I grow  
 Joyous at sight of thee more than the rest  
 Of this glad crowd, thou dost not bid me show. 60  
 Thou thinkest right ; who live among the blest,  
 Greater or less, have truth in that glass spied  
 Where, ere thou think'st, thy thought is manifest.  
 But that the holy love, which I long tide  
 Have watched, which fills my soul, in very deed, 65  
 With sweet desire, may best be satisfied,  
 Let thy speech now free, frank and open plead,  
 Find word each wish, each fond desire find word,  
 For which e'en now my answer is decreed."  
 I turned to Beatricè, and she heard 70  
 Before I spake, and smiled to me a sign  
 By which the wings of my desire were stirred.  
 Then I began : " In you doth Love combine  
 With Wisdom, since the first Equality  
 Upon you dawned, in equal weight and line : 75

he was to see Dante, and had hungered for the meeting. Thanks to Beatrice, the craving was at last satisfied.

<sup>55</sup> Dante's silence is explained. He believed that the spirit's knowledge of his thoughts came from the Primal Unity, *sc.* from God, who "understood them long before," and inferred that what was true of one thought would be true of others also, and therefore had not cared to utter them. So the Pythagoreans had taught that a true conception of the unit involved that of other numbers.

<sup>67</sup> The words are not without their bearing on the great paradox of prayer. God knows our wants and our desires before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, and yet He finds a joy in their clear full utterance by us.

<sup>74</sup> In what sense is God named as the Primal Equality? (1) As being He in whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning (*James* i. 17), always equal to Himself; (2) as being He in whom there is no before or after, no degrees of attributes; (3) though less probably, with reference to the Three Persons in the Godhead as co-equal as well as co-eternal. The souls of the blessed are in their vision sharers in that equality, and with

For in the Sun, whence light and heat flow free,  
 And burn and shine, they are so equal found  
 That all comparisons but feeble be ;  
 But will and power upon our mortal ground,  
 For reason which to you is manifest, 80  
 Are as to wings of diverse pinions bound.  
 Whence I, who am but mortal, am opprest  
 With this diverseness, nor can fit thanks frame,  
 Save in my heart, when by such father blest.  
 But let me ask, O living topaz-flame, 85  
 Who in this precious jewel thus art set,  
 That thou would'st still my cravings with thy  
 name."  
 "O scion of my house, in whom I, yet  
 Waiting, found joy, thy root behold in me."  
 So he began when me his answer met ; 90  
 And then he said, "The stock whence came to thee  
 Thy kindred's name, a hundred years and more  
 Has circled this Mount's lowest gallery,  
 Thy father's grandsire was, my son of yore ;  
 Well were it thou his lengthened weary toil 95  
 Should'st sooner by thy works to rest restore.

them perception and affection are absolutely coincident, while in men one precedes the other. Dante therefore, as in C. xiv. 88, can only return his thanks at first in general terms, and waits to know who it is that speaks to him.

88 We are thrown back upon Dante's memories of his childhood. Cacciaguida was obviously the hero of those early days, the great name that shed its lustre on the family traditions. From his son, Aldighieri, of the parish of St. Martin at Florence (named in a document of 1189; *Frat. V. D.* p. 38), had come the name which the poet bore. He had died (l. 92) in 1201, and the fact that he was on the first "cornice" of the Mount of Cleansing would imply that his sin had been that of pride, in which Dante may well have recognised (*Purg.* xiii. 136) the hereditary fault, which he himself shared. Italian commentators gravely discuss the question how far the date of Aldighieri's sojourn in Purgatory is correctly measured by a hundred years. Some admit the possibility of error in Dante; others would set aside the records that attest the actual date of his death, or fix 1301 for the ideal date of the vision.

96 Works as well as prayers were recognised as availing to shorten the purgatorial discipline of departed souls.

Florence, whose ancient walls, around her soil,  
 Still hear the tierce and nones of neighbouring  
 shrine,  
 Was chaste and sober, and without turmoil.  
 No golden chains, nor crowns that glittering shine, <sup>100</sup>  
 Nor sandalled dames had she, nor bordered zone  
 That from the wearer drew the gazer's eyne ;  
 She made not then the father's heart to groan  
 O'er daughter's birth, for then the year and dower  
 Had not, this side or that, due bounds outgrown. <sup>105</sup>  
 No homes undwelt in had she in that hour ;  
 Not then had come a new Sardanapal,  
 To show a wanton chambering's evil power.

<sup>97</sup> The extent of the walls of Florence (1078) is elaborately traced in *Vill.* iv. 8. Near these walls was the old Benedictine abbey, whose clock, as it struck the canonical hours, served as a standard of time for the whole of Florence. Benvenuto notes the fact that he could bear witness to its accuracy in striking when he attended Boccaccio's lectures on Dante in that church. Possibly this may be the clock described in *C. x.* 139-148, but I find no trace of its having the revolving figures there described.

<sup>100</sup> We are reminded at once of *Isai.* iii. 16-24 ; *1 Tim.* ii. 9 ; *1 Pet.* iii. 3, and of Savonarola's protests against the luxurious vanities of his time. *Vill.* (x. 150) gives an elaborate account of them in 1330, and of the sumptuary laws which were made with a view to check them. The "chains" seem to have been of the nature of bracelets or anklets.

<sup>101</sup> The two special fashions condemned seemed to have been (1) that of the boots which the ladies of Florence wore, of coloured and gilt leather, running to a sharp point, and (2) that of the girdle, which was so gorgeous that it attracted more notice than the form which it decked. Ovid (*Rem. Amor.* 344) may have floated before Dante's mind—

" *Gemmis auroque teguntur*  
*Omnia : pars minima est ipsa puella sui.*"

Comp. also *Conv.* i. 10.

<sup>104</sup> Early marriages, at the age of fifteen or even twelve, and settlements which almost broke the father or the husband's back, were two of the evils which, in Dante's view, were eating like a canker into the home life of Florence. If I mistake not, the words take their place among the most intensely personal in the whole poem. But for those precocious marriages *de convenance* for wealth and station, how different, how "earthly happier," might not Dante's life have been ! Do we not trace the memory of the bitterness of the moment when, on his return from school or college, at the age of eighteen, he found the idol of his boyhood married to Simon de' Bardi ?

<sup>106</sup> The line may indicate either (1) the effect of a profligate luxury in making men shun the burden of a family, or (2) the ostentation which led some citizens to have more houses than they inhabited, or (3) the party spirit which left houses empty by banishing their inhabitants. The context points to (1) as the most probable.

<sup>108</sup> Here again we have to choose between the dissoluteness of Sar

Not yet surpassed in fame was Montemal'  
 By your Uccellatoio, conquered now 110  
 In rising, as it shall be in its fall.  
 Bellincion Berti saw I girdled go  
 With bone and leather, and I saw his bride  
 Turn from her mirror with no painted show.  
 A Nerli and a Vecchio too I spied, 115  
 Content with dress where plain buff met the eye,  
 Their wives with flax and spindle occupied.  
 O happy they!—and each might certain die  
 Of her own burial-place, and none was yet  
 For France left lonely in her bed to lie. 120  
 This o'er the cradle watchful care did set,  
 And hushed her infant with the babbling speech  
 Which doth in parent's hearts delight beget ;

danapalus or the effeminate luxury which showed itself in the coverlets and beds of down which are condemned in *H.* xxiv. 47. So Juvenal (x. 36) speaks of

“*Et Venere, et cœnis et plumis Sardanapali.*”

109 Monte Malo, the *Monte Mario* of modern Rome, which gives the first view of Rome on the road from Viterbo, was covered, when Dante wrote, by the villas of its nobles. The hill Uccellatoio was, in like manner, the spot which gave the first view of Florence, and this also had been fortified and covered with palatial houses. Florence had surpassed Rome in its rise ; it should surpass it also in its fall.

112 Bellincion Berti (comp. *Vill.* iv. 1), father of the good Gualdrada (*H.* xvi. 37), of the family of the Ravignani, is taken as the type of the *populo vecchio*, with his buff jerkin and bone clasp, and his wife, who had not yet learned the use of rouge, nor of what we call “pearl-powder,” for her complexion.

115 The Nerli, on the left bank of the Arno, were among the older powerful Guelph families of Florence (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 39, vi. 33). One of them was Consul in 1104. In Dante's time some were Neri and some Bianchi (*Vill.* viii. 39). The Vecchi or Vecchiotti belonged to the same order. They too were content with buff jerkins without trimmings, their wives with the clothes which they wove for themselves. They too were divided in their politics between the two factions (*Vill.* viii. 39).

118 Do we hear the sigh of the exile, uncertain whether he, or the wife, sister, daughter whom he loved should be buried with their fathers, and thinking of his wife left to her lonely bed, through the arts of Charles of Valois? More definitely the lines speak of the fashion which led men to go to France and other countries in search of fortune, leaving their wives in Florence. Had the banking business of Simon de' Bardi led him to make Paris his headquarters, while Beatrice was left to the society of her lady friends? Comp. vol. i. p. xlv.

121 The older matrons of Florence were not ashamed to nurse their own

That from her distaff would the long thread reach,  
 And, as she conversed with her family, 125  
 Of Trojans, Fiesole, and Rome would teach.  
 Men then had seen with full as wondering eye  
 A Cianghella or a Salterell'  
 As now a Cincinnate or Cornelia.  
 To such fair life, where all sped calm and well, 130  
 True life of citizens, to such a share  
 In citizenship true, to such hostel,  
 Did Mary give me, called by many a prayer,  
 To that your old Baptistery, wherein  
 Christian's and Cacciaguida's name I bare. 135

children, and lull them with the nursery words which true fathers and mothers delight to use. They would sit spinning and telling their tales of old times. Was the scene of Lucretia and her maidens (*Liv.* i. 57) present to Dante's mind? It may be fairly assumed that the picture was one with which Dante's own childhood had been familiar, and so throws light on his early home-life and its influences. The tale of Troy, the foundation of Fiesole by Electra (*H.* iv. 121), the history of Rome as the mother city of Florence, were among his earliest memories.

<sup>127</sup> Cianghella della Tosa appears to have been one of the leaders of fashion in Dante's time, shameless and luxurious, asserting her claims to precedence by acts of personal violence to those who did not recognise them. The name of the family appears frequently in Villani (viii. 71, ix. 76, *et al.*). Some were connected with the Neri, but one, Rosso della Tosa, who was at one time a leader of that party, became afterwards prominent as an opponent of Corso Donati. Lapo Salterello is named in *D. C.* 246 as a Ghibelline connected with the Cerchi. He was included in the same decree of banishment as Dante (*D. C.* 273). The commentators speak of him as extravagant and profligate. He was probably among the exiles whom Dante had learnt to scorn (*C.* xvii. 68). His name appears in the list of Priori to whom Dante owed his appointment, and he was included in the same sentence of condemnation.

<sup>129</sup> Cincinnatus is, of course, the Dictator of that name (*Liv.* iii. 25); Cornelia may be either the mother of the Gracchi or the wife of Pompeius. Lucan's praises of the latter (viii. 577-780) tend to turn the scale in her favour.

<sup>130</sup> The reader will scarcely fail to recall John of Gaunt's speech in Shakespeare, *Richard II.* We note the contrast between the "*dolce ostello*" of the poem and the "*di dolore ostello*" of *Purg.* vi. 76. See note on *C.* xvi. 33.

<sup>133</sup> The birth of Cacciaguida has been fixed at 1106. Dante records with pride the fact that his great-grandsire and himself had been baptized at the same font, that of his "beautiful St. John's" (*C.* xxv. 9; *H.* xix. 17). Cacciaguida, it will be seen, was the Crusader's Christian name. It has been conjectured from the name of one of his brothers that he belonged to the Elisei, who are named in *Vill.* iv. 11 as among the noble families of Florence under Conrad I. (911-918), but there is no historical foundation for the statement.

Moronto, Eliseo, were my kin;  
 My wife came to me from the vale of Po,  
 And thence thy parents did their surname win.  
 The Emperor Conrad then I followed so  
 That he gave me the girdle of a knight, 140  
 So well my good deeds in his eyes did show.  
 With him I went against the evil might  
 Of that false law, whose followers occupy  
 Usurping, through the Shepherd's fault, your right:  
 There by that people base and vile did I 145  
 From that deceitful world obtain release,  
 The love of which turns many a soul awry,  
 And passed from martyr's pain to this my peace."

## CANTO XVI

*Cacciaguida's History of the Greatness and Fall of Florence*

O WEAK and poor nobility of birth !  
 If thou dost make the people boast of thee,  
 Where languishes affection, here on earth,

<sup>137</sup> Three cities, Ferrara, Parma, and Verona, have been named as the birthplace of Cacciaguida's wife. Cittadella (*Le Fam. degli Ald. a Ferrara*) proves that a family named Aldighieri existed in the first of these cities. Villani (*V. D.* p. 9) says that the name was well known at Parma. Dionisi (*Anedd.* ii. 35-37) asserts that an Aldighieri was judge of Verona in 1112. So it is still *lis sub judice* (*Scart.*).

<sup>139</sup> Conrad II. (1024-39), who took part, with Louis VII. of France, in the second Crusade and besieged Damascus, is probably the Emperor referred to. Villani (iv. 9) relates that he had many Florentine citizens in his army, and that they were high in his favour. Most critics, however, refer Cacciaguida's words to Conrad III. (1138-1152). (See C. xvi. 37 n.)

<sup>142</sup> We note the same protest against the abandonment of the Crusades by the Popes of Dante's time as in C. ix. 126. Clement V. and John XXII. might collect tithes throughout Europe ostensibly for the recovery of the Holy Land, but the money remained in their coffers.

<sup>148</sup> The words imply that Cacciaguida died in the Crusade campaign, and probably Dante uses "*martirio*" in its highest sense. For the most part, however, it is used in the *Commedia* (*H.* xii. 61, xiv. 65), and in other passages, simply for "torments," and that may be its meaning here.

<sup>1</sup> In *Canz.* xvi. and *Conv.* iv. Dante had maintained the doctrine "*virtus sola nobilitas*." In this he followed Boethius (iii. 6), who only admitted an inherited nobility on the *noblesse oblige* principle. That teaching had



No more 'twill be a wondrous thing to me,  
 For there, where appetite ne'er goes astray, 5  
 I mean in Heaven, from pride I was not free.  
 A cloak thou art which shortens day by day,  
 So that, unless we fresh additions make,  
 Time with his scissors cuts it all away!  
 With "You"—the word which suffering Rome first 10  
     spake,  
 (In which her children fail to persevere),  
 My words began again their course to take.  
 Then Beatrice, just apart, yet near,  
 Smiling, appeared like her, the coughing maid,  
 Who marked the first sin writ of Guinevere. 15  
 I then began, "You are my sire," I said,  
 "You grant to me to speak with freedom bold,  
 You raise me, and new self leaves self in shade.

marked the democratic period of his life. In *Mon.* ii. 3, which is nearer in time and tone to the teaching of this Canto, he recognises both forms of nobility as having a real worth. Here he pleads guilty to the charge that he was not exempted from the weakness which exults in the virtues even of one illustrious ancestor. Poor it might be, as compared with the personal nobility of holiness, but it was natural, and therefore right. It did not altogether clash with the thoughts that belonged to Paradise.

<sup>7</sup> The words imply the admission that the Alighieri family had not acted on the *noblesse oblige* principle. Time had clipped the mantle, and they had done nothing to keep up its measure. Did he feel conscious, with a proud humility, that he had "from day to day" been adding to its proportions?

<sup>10</sup> Thrice only in the *Commedia* does Dante himself use the plural pronoun for the singular in words spoken to one person, to Brunetto (*H.* xv. 30), to Beatrice (*Purg.* xxxiii. 92), and here. Francesca had used it also in speaking to Dante (*H.* v. 95). It was therefore a mark of special reverence and honour, and so he uses it now to his great forefather. The mediæval tradition, reported by all the commentators, was that *vos* was first used at Rome instead of *tu* in the address of the Senate to Julius Cæsar, when, as Dictator, he united in himself all the offices of the Republic (*Benv., Ott.*). As a matter of fact, however, there is, I believe, no instance of this use of *vos* before the 3rd century after Christ. Dante notes, with the minuteness which characterises the *V. E.*, that at Rome the *voi* had disappeared even when men spoke to a Pope or Emperor. With him it is a mark of exceptional reverence, which it is, of course, impossible to express in an English translation. The use of the third person feminine, as in modern Italian, is of much later date.

<sup>15</sup> The words refer to the same story as that of *H.* v. 129-137. Branguina, a lady of Guinevere's court, saw the kiss which the queen gave Lancelot, and by her cough showed the lovers that they were not unnoticed. The story is told in a MS. in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* of Paris, and is given

Through many streams my soul with bliss untold  
 Is filled, and finds in this so pure a joy, 20  
 That, without bursting, it such cheer may hold.  
 Tell me, dear root ancestral, their employ,  
 Who were thy sires, and how the years passed on  
 Which tracked their course when thou wast yet a  
 boy.

Tell me about the sheepfold of St. John, 25  
 What it then was, and who the people were  
 That then the highest seats of honour won."  
 As kindles charcoal into bright flame clear  
 At breath of wind, so I beheld that light  
 More radiant at my blandishments appear; 30  
 And as unto mine eyes it showed more bright,  
 So with a voice more tender and more sweet,  
 But not with this our modern accent quite,  
 He said, "Since *Ave* first the ear did greet,  
 Unto that birth when she who now is blest 35  
 Was freed from me, her freight, in season meet,  
 Five hundred times and fourscore had the crest  
 Of this star to its Lion found its way,  
 With fresh flame at its feet itself to vest.

in full by Mr. Paget Toynbee in the *Transactions* of the Cambridge (U.S.A.) Dante Society for 1886. A brief sketch (without the cough though) by Uhland may be found in *D. Gesell.* i. 119.

<sup>22</sup> Dante asks the same question as Farinata had asked of him (*H.* ix. 42). How far back can he trace his ancestry? What had been the state of Florence in the beginning of the 12th century? May we think of Dante as having been in Rome with Villani in the year of the Jubilee, and having felt, with him, the impulse of historical enthusiasm (*Vill.* viii. 36)?

<sup>33</sup> The words imply an archaic quasi-Latin form of speech, as contrasted with the later dialects, which are noted in the *V. E.* (i. 13), especially that of Florence, as corrupt and semi-barbarous. *Comp. C.* xv. 28.

<sup>37</sup> The date of Cacciaguیدا's birth is given, after Dante's manner, astronomically. In *Conv.* ii. 15 he gives the revolution of Mars as "about two years." The *Almagest* of Ptolemy, translated into Latin in 1230, and the basis of all Dante's astronomical knowledge, gives 686 days. Taking the reading "*e trenta*" in l. 38, this would give A.D. 1090-91 as the date of birth, or taking "*e tre*," A.D. 1033. The former date leads to the conclusion that Conrad III. was the Emperor under whom Cacciaguیدا fought. The latter would make Conrad II.'s Crusade take place in Cacciaguیدا's infancy. *Scart.* is driven to the conjecture that Dante blundered in his chronology, or mixed up the two Conrads. The constellation Leo is named as that

I and my fathers saw the light of day 40  
 Where first is found their last ward's boundary  
 Who in your annual games their speed display.  
 Let this suffice for tale of ancestry ;  
 But who they were, and whence they thither came,  
 Less honour doth in speech than silence lie. 45  
 And those who bore arms at the time I name,  
 Between the Baptist and Mars' statue old,  
 Were but a fifth of those it now may claim ;  
 But then the city, which doth now behold  
 Campi, Certaldo's, and Figghine's race, 50  
 To the last craftsman had true sons enrolled.  
 Oh, how much better that such people's place  
 Should still remain in outward neighbourhood,  
 And at Galuzz' and Trespiano trace

whose name made it the appropriate *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* of the orbit of Mars.

<sup>40</sup> The home of Cacciaguida is defined as in the last region reached in the annual races which were run on the Festival of St. John Baptist. This was near the Porta San Pietro, in the Piazza opposite the Church of San Martin, near the street which leads to the Mercato Vecchio. Here the house shown as Dante's still stands. See the plans of ancient Florence in *Phil.* and Witte, *D. F.* ii. 1, and Reumont (*Dante's Familie* in *D. Gesell.* ii. p. 333).

<sup>43</sup> What was the reason of Cacciaguida's, *i.e.*, of Dante's, reticence Was it that his ancestors were immigrants too obscure to notice, or so illustrious (Romans, Elisei, or Frangipani, or the like) that it would be vainglorious to speak of them? I incline, looking to the use of the same formula in *H.* iv. 104, and to the same feeling in *V. N.* c. 29, to the latter view, but it is, of course, impossible to do more than guess. *H.* xv. 61-78 is, of course, in favour of the view I have taken. Commentators, early and late, vary widely.

<sup>46</sup> The statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio and the Baptistry are named as the limits north and south. Those on the east and west were the gates of St. Piero and St. Pancrazio.

<sup>48</sup> The number of citizens of military age at Florence in 1300 is estimated at 30,000 (*Scart.*). Dante, with or without data, reckons it as 6000 at the time of Cacciaguida's birth.

<sup>49</sup> Campi is a small town in the Val d'Arno, about nine miles from Florence. Certaldo, the birthplace of Boccaccio, in the Val d'Elsa (*Purg.* xxxiii. 67); Figghine, between Pontassieve and Arezzo. Immigrants from these places had, in Dante's view, corrupted the purity of Florentine blood. Comp. *H.* xv. 62, where a like corruption is traced to the immigrants from Fiesole.

<sup>53</sup> Galluzzo, on the road to Siena, two miles from Florence; Trespiano, in the Val d'Arno, four miles. Extended boundaries had brought in a lower class of citizens.

Your bounds, than tolerate that stinking brood, 55  
 The churls of Signa and Aguglion,  
 Who for corruption have keen eyes and good!  
 Had not the race that most debased hath grown  
 In all the world, to Cæsar step-dame been,  
 But kind as is a mother to her son, 60  
 Then some who buy and sell as Florentine  
 Would have turned back again to Simifonti,  
 Where once their grandsires were as beggars seen  
 At Montemurlo still would be the Conti,  
 The Cerchi would in Acon's parish be, 65  
 In Grieve's vale, may be, the Buondelmonti.  
 In blending with new races still we see,  
 As ever, cause of all our city's woes,  
 As with the body mixed meats ill agree:

<sup>58</sup> The two men held up to infamy are Ubaldo of Aguglione (*n.* on *Purg.* xii. 105), one of the Priori in 1311, and Bonifazio of Signa, a judge notorious for his venality, both probably belonging to the Neri, who had condemned Dante for that fault. *D. C.* (i. p. 16) mentions a Pino of Signa. One notes the fact that Dante charges his opponent with the very crime for which he had himself been condemned (*Frat. V. D.* p. 147).

<sup>59</sup> The evils of Florence are traced to the vices of the clergy. The Church proved herself not the nursing mother of the Empire, but its stepmother, hostile, envious, cruel. The theory of the *Monarchiâ* had not been recognised. Florence had been the leader of the league of Tuscany and Romagna against Henry VII.

<sup>61</sup> We are left to guess who is alluded to. Conjectures have identified him with one of the Pitti family, who surrendered Simifonti to the Florentines in 1202, who in 1300 was one of the wealthy merchants of that city. The sneer in l. 63 implies that he was little more than a beggar in his native village.

<sup>64</sup> The Conti Guidi in 1207 sold Montemurlo, between Pistoia and Prato, to the Florentines, who had helped them to recover it from the first of those cities (*Vill.* v. 31). The Cerchi came from Acone on its capture by the Florentines, settled in Florence in 1053 (*Vill.* iv. 37), and became rich. Dante, though he belonged to the same party, seems to have looked on the Cerchi with special disfavour (*H.* iii. 35 *n.*).

<sup>66</sup> The Buondelmonti in like manner occupied Monte Buono, in the valley of the Grieve, till in 1135 it was taken by the Florentines, and its inhabitants compelled to settle in their city (*Vill.* iv. 36). It was to a member of that family that Dante looked as the source of all the factions that had marred the prosperity of Florence (l. 140).

<sup>67</sup> In this mingling of men of different origins and habits Dante sees the beginning of confusion. Mere material greatness did but increase that confusion and the disasters that followed from it. One keen sword wielded by the hand of a true soldier was worth more than five in the hands of a degenerate populace. The precise number refers to l. 48.

And a blind bull more headlong downfall shows 70  
 Than a blind lamb; and oft one sword will try  
 The might of five with more incisive blows.  
 If Luni, Urbisaglia, thou descry,  
 How they have fall'n, or are in act to fall,  
 Chiusi, Sinigaglia, following nigh, 75  
 To learn how races wither, one and all,  
 Will not seem strange to thee, nor hard to hear,  
 Since Time e'en cities to their end doth call.  
 All that is yours the doom of death must bear,  
 As ye yourselves, but this is hid from view, 80  
 In what lasts long, so short your own career.  
 And as from changes of the moon ensue  
 The ceaseless flux and reflux on the shore,  
 So Fortune works on Florence and on you:  
 Wherefore it should seem wonderful no more 85  
 That which I tell of older Florentines,  
 Whose fame is now more hidden than of yore.  
 The Ughi, Alberichi, Catellines,  
 Filippi, Greci, Ormanni I found,  
 E'en in their fall illustrious citizens; 90

<sup>73</sup> An induction is drawn from the fortunes of others. Luni (*H.* xx. 47), on the Magra, in the region of Carrara, whose history tradition carried up to the time of the Trojan war, had dwindled to insignificance (*Vill.* i. 50). Dante, it will be remembered, had found a refuge with the Malaspini of the Lunigiana (vol. i. p. lxxxv.). Urbisaglia, once famous as the *Urbs Salvia* of *Plin.* iii. 111, in the March of Ancona, had shared the same fate. Chiusi, the *Clusium* of Lars Porsena (*Liv.* ii. 9; Strabo, v. 226), and Sinigaglia, the *Sena Gallica* of *Plin.* iii. 113, in Romagna, on the shores of the Adriatic, were in Dante's time examples of the decline and fall of greatness. All human greatness was, indeed, transitory, but in some instances the slowness of change gave a show of permanence. (So Aquinas, "*Perpetuo homo non manet; etiam ipsa civitas deficit.*"—*Summ.* iii., *Suppl.* 99, 1.)

<sup>82</sup> The lunar theory of the tides is stated in Dante's treatise of *De Aquâ et Terrâ*, c. 7. So Fortune (*H.* vii. 62) rules the tides in the affairs of men.

<sup>88</sup> It lies in the nature of the case that but little can be known of those who are named as already half forgotten, but the passage is interesting as showing Dante's study of the archaeology of his beloved city. We may compare the lists with those in *Vill.* iv. 10-13; *Malisp.* c. 76, 100, 103. The Ughi were known as the builders of the Church of S. Maria that bears their name in Faenza. They and the Catellini were sent into exile (*Vill.* iv. 12). The Filippi once occupied the quarter of the Porta S. Maria in the Mercato Nuovo. The Greci gave their name to a Borgo of Florence (*Vill.* iv. 13). The Ormanni once dwelt on the site of the Palazzo del

And saw, time-honoured and with glory crowned,  
 Sannella's, Arca's house, Bostichi, yea,  
 Ardinghi and Soldanier' renowned.  
 Nigh to the gate on which there now doth stay  
 New felony so heavy in its weight, 95  
 'Twill sink our good ship at no distant day,  
 There were the Ravignani, of whose state  
 Count Guido is the heir, and who doth own  
 The name that old Bellincion made great.  
 To him of Della Pressa then was known 100  
 How men are ruled, and Galigaio bare  
 A hilt and sword-guard where the bright gold shone.  
 Great even then the column miniver,  
 Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti, Barucci,  
 Galli, and those who blush for bushel there. 105

Popolo; they had changed their name to Foraboschi (*Vill.* iv. 13). The Church of S. Maria Alberighi preserved the name of that family, which in Dante's time was extinct (*Vill.* iv. 11). Of the Sannella (*Vill.* iv. 13) and Arca (*Vill.* iv. 12) families, all we know is that the *Ott.* mentions that their descendants were living in Florence in poverty. The Soldanieri had been banished as Ghibellines (*Vill.* iv. 12; *H.* xxxii. 121). The Ardinghi were Guelphs and neighbours of the Alighieri near the Porta S. Piero (*Vill.* iv. 11); the Bostichi Guelphs were banished after Montaperti (*Vill.* vi. 80). The alternate triumphs of the two parties had been fatal to the leading families of both.

<sup>94</sup> The gate is that of St. Peter, but a *v. l.* gives *poppa* instead of *porta*. The "felony" is that of the Cerchi (*Vill.* viii. 38), but some commentators (*But.*, *Anon. Fior.*) connect it with the Bardi (the family of Beatrice's husband), and others with the Donati. As a matter of fact, the houses of the Ravignani passed into the hands of the Counts Guidi in 1280, and afterwards into those of the Cerchi. To this house belonged the Bellincion Berti of C. xv. 112, the father of Gualdrada (*H.* xvi. 37), and through her the ancestor of the Counts Guidi of the Casentino (*H.* xxx. 65; *Purg.* v. 94, xiv. 43).

<sup>100</sup> The house of Della Pressa belonged to the Ghibellines, who were banished in 1258, and shared in the victory of Montaperti. They had been among the official families of Florence (*Vill.* vi. 65, 78). The gilded hilt and pommel of the Galigai showed they were knights. They too were Ghibellines, and lived in the quarter of the Porta S. Piero (*Vill.* v. 39, vi. 33, 65).

<sup>103</sup> As in *H.* xvii. 55-66, Dante shows himself an expert in the armorial bearings of Florence. The "column" (corresponding to the "pale" of English heraldry) of ermine was borne by the Pigli (*Vill.* iv. 12, v. 39). With these are joined one Guelph and three Ghibelline families, who are nothing more than the shadow of a name. The *Novelle* of Sacchetti, which include some Dante anecdotes, have redeemed one of them from oblivion (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 39, vi. 79). The Giuochi were Ghibellines (*Vill.* iv. 11,

The stock from which have sprung the Calfucci  
 Was great e'en then, and to the curule chair  
 Were led the Sizi and the Arrigucci.

Ah me! what men I saw who now ill fare  
 Through their own pride, and how the balls of  
 gold

110

Enflowered our Florence with deeds great and rare.  
 So lived and wrought their ancestors of old,  
 Who, when your Church presents a vacant see,  
 Grow fat, as they their consistory hold.

The haughty race which dragons it when flee  
 The weak before it, and for those who show  
 Or teeth or purse, like lamb goes peaceably,  
 E'en then was rising, but from lineage low,  
 So that Ubert' Donati took it ill

115

Through his wife's father kinship's claims to  
 owe.

120

v. 39, vi. 33), as also were the Fifanti (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 38, vi. 65), and the Barucci (*Vill.* iv. 10, v. 39, vi. 33).

<sup>105</sup> The fact referred to is the falsification of the public standard of weights by one of the Chiaramontese (*Purg.* xii. 105), who were Guelphs (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39).

<sup>106</sup> The Calfucci were sprung from the same stock as the Donati, but dwindled and decayed while their other branch rose to power (*Vill.* iv. 10). Both the Arrigucci and the Sizi are said to have been Guelphs (*Vill.* iv. 10, v. 39). Some of the former, however, joined the Bianchi (*Vill.* vii. 39).

<sup>109</sup> The next family are described, not named, and the description identifies them with the Uberti, the haughtiest of all the older noblesse (*Vill.* i. 41, iv. 3, 13, *et al.*; *H.* vi. 80, x. 32). The balls of gold on a field azure were the arms of the Lamberti. They were Ghibellines, and came originally from Germany (*Vill.* iv. 12). Mosca (*H.* vi. 80, xxviii. 106) belonged to this house.

<sup>112</sup> The Visdomini (*Vill.* iv. 10, v. 39), Feringhi (*ibid.*), Alietti, and Cortigiani are named by the early commentators as the patrons and defenders of the Episcopate. Their function was to take possession of the Bishop's palace during a vacancy, and to hold it, not without dinners and suppers at the cost of the see, till a successor was appointed.

<sup>115</sup> The "brood" are identified with the Adimari (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39), who, in a branch known as Cavicciuoli, have Filippo Argenti (*H.* viii. 61) as their representative in the *Commedia*. Adimari is said by Boccaccio to have been put in possession of Dante's property, and to have been foremost in opposing any proposals for his recall from exile. Hence perhaps the emphasised bitterness of the poet's tone in speaking of his family. In Cacciaguida's time they were emerging from obscurity, but Ubertino Donati, who had married a daughter of Belincione Berti, is said to have objected to Berti's giving another daughter to one of the Adimari, on the ground that the family were of inferior rank.

And Caponsacco did the market fill,  
 From Fiesole descending, and there too  
 Were Giuda, Infangato, worthy still  
 A thing I'll tell incredible, yet true :  
 One entered the small circle by a gate 125  
 Which men as named from Della Pera knew.  
 Each one of those who bear the arms of state  
 Of that great Baron, whose high praise and name  
 The feast of Thomas yet doth celebrate,  
 Received from him their knighthood and their fame, 130  
 Though with the people he is closely bound,  
 Who now with bordure doth ensign the same.  
 The Gualterotti then were famous found,  
 And Importuni ; quiet now would be  
 The Burgh, but for new neighbours that abound. 135

121 For Dante's view of the immigrants from Fiesole, see *H.* xv. 62. The Caponsacchi were Ghibellines, and settled in the Mercato Vecchio (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39). Beatrice's mother was of that house. Giuda's family is named by *Malisp.* (c. 137), but not by Villani. They are said (*Ott.*) to have been banished with the Cerchi.

124 Those of Pera are said to have been the Peruzzi, who joined the Bianchi (*Vill.* iv. 13, viii. 12, 62, 71, *et al.*), and who gave their name to the Porta Peruzzi. What was the incredible thing? It may have been (1) that the Porta named should then have been one of the outer gates of a city which had grown so large ; (2) that the state of Florence was so peaceful that no offence was taken at a gate being named after a private family ; (3) that a family once so important as to have a gate named after them was now scarcely heard of. *Lis sub judice.* I incline to (2).

127 The great baron was Hugh, Marquis of Brandenburg, who lived and died at Florence as Vicar of the Emperor Otho III. He made many knights of the Pulci, Nerli, Gangalandi, Giandonati, and the Della Bella families, all of whom, in honour of his memory, quartered his arms with theirs (*Vill.* iv. 2). He sold his German estates, and, having no heir, endowed seven abbeys with the proceeds. He died on St. Thomas's day, 1106, and a solemn mass for his soul was said on that festival in the Abbey of S. Maria at Florence.

131 Probably a hit at Gian della Bella, the author of the democratic ordinances of justice (*Vill.* viii. 1-8) in 1293. He too bore the arms of the great baron surrounded by a golden border, and yet united himself with the people against the nobles. The fact that Gian della Bella was exiled in 1295 is hardly enough to set aside a conjecture so natural in itself.

133 The Gualterotti and Importuni who were Guelphs (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 39), were of the Borgo degli Apostoli. The words that follow point to the Buondelmonti, who settled at a later period (1135) in the same Borgo, and who were conspicuous in the tragedy referred to in *H.* xxviii. 106, and thus became disturbers of the peace of Florence.



The house whence sprang your wail of misery,  
 Through the just wrath that hath left many dead,  
 And put an end to life passed joyously,  
 On others and itself all honour shed.  
 O Buondelmonte, to what issue bad 140  
 Wast thou to leave thy bride by others led!  
 Many had then rejoiced who now are sad,  
 If God to Ema's waters thee had thrown,  
 When first to thee our city welcome bade.  
 But it was meet that by that broken stone 145  
 That guards the bridge thou should'st a victim fall  
 To Florence, when her peace was all but gone.  
 With these I name, with others, like in all,  
 I Florence saw in such profound repose 150  
 She had no need in weeping loud to call;  
 With such as these a people glorious  
 And just I saw, whose lily ne'er was known  
 To hang inverted on the spear of foes,  
 Nor by division turned vermilion."

<sup>136</sup> This was the Ghibelline house of the Amidei (*Vill.* v. 38, 39, vi. 65). Buondelmonte had agreed to marry a daughter of that house by way of making amends for having wounded her brother in a brawl, and this was the beginning of the dark history of that Easter Day of 1215.

<sup>143</sup> The Ema was a stream flowing near the castle of Montebuono (destroyed in 1135; *Vill.* iv. 36). The form of Dante's statement suggests that *the* Buondelmonte of the tragedy had been nearly drowned in it when he first left the old home of his fathers to come to Florence; but nothing is known.

<sup>145</sup> The statue of Mars haunts Dante's thoughts, as in *H.* xiii. 143-150. The murder of Buondelmonte took place close to the statue (*Vill.* v. 38), as though the old god of war demanded a victim. One notes the pregnant force of the phrase, the "last peace." The murder had been as "the beginning of troubles."

<sup>148</sup> Dante, through Cacciagnida, looks back upon "the good old days" of Florence, as he looked forward to the future of the "Greyhound" reformer (*H.* i. 101). Memory and hope are always the regions in which the idealist moves most freely. What is for us an almost tedious list of half-forgotten names was for him full of historic memories. The old records of Florence attested their greatness. Faction, strife, mutual decrees of banishment had brought them to decay, and they had vanished, or were vanishing, from the stage on which they had played their part. *Malisp.* c. 52, 53, 54, 55, 61, 103, 137, presents many interesting points of contact.

<sup>154</sup> The white lily on a red shield had been the old standard of Florence. On the expulsion of the Ghibellines in 1251, the Guelphs, who remained in possession, changed the arms of the city to a red lily on a white shield, the

*Cacciaguida—Prophecy of Dante's Exile—Can Grande della Scala*

As he who came to ask of Clymene  
 If what against himself he heard were true,  
 He through whom sires to sons so grudging be,  
 So was I, and e'en thus I stood in view  
 Of Beatricè and of that blest light, 5  
 That for my sake had changed its station due.  
 Wherefore my Lady spake: "Give vent outright  
 To thy desire's strong flame, that it may be  
 Stamped with the mark of all thine inner might.  
 Not that through any speech of thine do we 10  
 Gain greater knowledge, but that thou may'st learn  
 To tell thy thirst, that we give drink to thee."  
 "O my dear Root, who such high place dost earn,  
 That, as our minds, to earthly senses tied,  
 That angles twain obtuse can't be, discern 15  
 In one triangle, thus thou hast espied  
 Contingent things ere they in being are,  
 Gazing where all times in one Now abide.

exiles continuing faithful to the old arms, which thus became the badge of their Ghibellinism (*Vill.* vi. 43). Till that change, Dante implies, all had gone well with Florence in her wars with neighbouring states. Afterwards there was nothing but disaster. So in *Ep.* i. he speaks of "*candida nostra signa*."

<sup>1</sup> Phaethon, who, on hearing his divine parentage denied by Epaphus, came to his mother Clymene to ask if he were indeed the son of Apollo, and who asked, as a proof of sonship, that he might drive the chariot of the sun (*Met.* i. 748, ii. 328), comes before Dante's mind as the type of his own eager desire to know more. In his case, however, the desire points to the future, and not to the past. *Comp. H.* xvii. 107; *Purg.* iv. 72, xxix. 119.

<sup>7</sup> The words have obviously a deeper meaning than lies on the surface, and point to the great mystery of all prayer. We do not utter our desires to make them known to Him who "knows our necessities before we ask," but in order that we may learn the habit of confiding trust in the Love that is "always more ready to hear than we to pray."

<sup>13</sup> To the souls who see all things in the mirror of the Divine Mind, what are to us contingent facts are as certain as what we know as the necessary truths of mathematics, such, *e.g.*, as that the three angles of a triangle are always equal to two right angles, and therefore that there cannot be in any triangle two obtuse angles.

While I did Virgil's welcome presence share  
 Up on the mount which heals the souls that fall, <sup>20</sup>  
 Or through the dead world's lowest depths did fare,  
 Of what may me in future years befall  
 Grave words were spoken to me, though I feel  
 Set firm, four square, 'gainst fate's blows one and all.  
 Wherefore I fain would learn the woe or weal <sup>25</sup>  
 That Fortune brings me in the coming day ;  
 A dart foreseen a weaker stroke doth deal."  
 Thus spake I then to that same shining ray  
 Which with me spake before, and so my mind,  
 As Beatrice willed, did I display. <sup>30</sup>  
 Not in dark speech, as when the nations blind  
 Were snared ere yet the Lamb of God was slain  
 That takes away the sin of all mankind,  
 But in clear utterance, open speech and tone, <sup>35</sup>  
 Made answer to me that paternal love,  
 Close hidden, yet by smiling radiance known.

<sup>19</sup> We are thrown back on *Purg.* viii. 133-139, xi. 140, 141, xxiv. 43-48 ; *H.* x. 79-81, 124-132, xv. 61-78, 88-96. In *H.* x. 130, xv. 88, Beatrice had been named as the oracle that was to foretell the future, and we have to assume either (1) that Dante had forgotten this, or (2) that he changed his purpose, as thinking that the prediction came better from the lips of Cacciaguida than from her who was now the representative of the highest form of Divine Wisdom. I incline to (2).

<sup>23</sup> The phrase comes through Aristotle (*Rhet.* iii. 2, *Eth. Nic.* i. 10) from Simonides (Plato, *Protag.* 344 A). The perfect cube was an emblem of completest stability. We note the proud self-consciousness with which Dante claims it for himself. Gregory the Great (*Hom.* xxi.) had applied it to the "saints of God."

<sup>28</sup> The proverb has been ascribed (*Daniello*) to Ovid, but is not found in his works—

"*Nam prævvisa minus lædere tela solent.*"

<sup>31</sup> The two classical instances were probably present to Dante's mind. (1) The Delphic oracle to Cræsus, that if he crossed the Halys he would destroy a great kingdom (*Herod.* i. 53), which he may have read in *Cic. De Div.* ii. 56, and the "*Aio te, Æacide, Romanos vincere posse,*" which was said to have been given to Pyrrhus.

<sup>32</sup> Dante, like Milton in his *Ode on the Nativity*, assumed the tradition that the oracles had ceased after the Crucifixion. The legend first appears in *Plut. De Def. Orac.* and *Euseb. Præp. Evang.* bk. v.

<sup>34</sup> "*Latin,*" used for "*Italian,*" as in *C.* xii. 144.

"Contingency, which doth not pass above  
 The book of sensuous knowledge, all doth lie  
 Before His gaze in whom the ages move,  
 But not from thence it takes necessity, 40  
 No more than from the eye by which 'tis seen,  
 A ship that on strong current sweepeth by.  
 Thence, as the ear a concord sweet doth glean  
 From organ-notes, there comes within my sight 45  
 The future that for thee prepared hath been.  
 As Hippolyt from Athens took his flight,  
 Through step-dame's cruel hate and perfidy,  
 So thou must Florence leave in thy despite ;  
 Thus men have willed, for this their arts they ply :  
 And soon the end will come which now they seek, 50  
 Where even Christ men daily sell and buy.

37 Contingency—that which, from our standpoint, may or may not come to pass—is ever present in the eternal Now of the mind of God. So far the sense is clear. The other words specify the character of the contingent matters referred to as belonging to the future. That lies beyond the limits of man's knowledge, and must, because future, be contingent to him, while past events lose even for him the contingent character which they once had and become objective facts. The "book" to which man's knowledge is thus compared is one made of a single quire of paper, the metaphor pointing to the narrow limits of that knowledge. Comp. C. xxxiii. 85-87.

40 Few profound thinkers have failed to seek to solve the problem of "fixed fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute." Few attempts have shown a more subtle fancy than this. We see a ship gliding on the sea. Our sight does not affect its motion. God sees eternally the great stream of the events which are manifested in time, yet they are not therefore necessitated by Him. Comp. Milton, *P. L.* ii. 860, iii. 117.

44 The reference to the organ may be compared with *Purg.* ix. 144. They were obviously common in the larger Italian churches in Dante's time.

47 Hippolytus was banished by his father Theseus because his stepmother Phædra, who wished to seduce him, charged him with attempting to seduce her (*Met.* xv. 493-514). Such a stepmother Florence had proved in banishing Dante on the charge of speculation. The last line of the passage referred to, "*Immeritumque pater projecit ab urbe*," connects itself with Dante's frequent description of himself as "*immeritus exul*" (*Epp.* ii. 1, iv. 1, v. 1). For the "stepmother" metaphor, comp. C. xvi. 59.

49 We are thrown back upon the Florentine politics of 1300, when Boniface VIII. was already scheming to send Charles of Valois to crush the opposition of which Dante was one of the foremost leaders. The words gain a special significance if we remember that Dante was probably at Rome at the assumed date of the prophecy. "Christ bought and sold" points, of course, to the simony which was rampant at Rome (*H.* xix. 1-75).

And blame, as it is wont, its rage doth wreak  
 On those who suffer wrong, but Vengeance high  
 Shall to the Truth Who sends it witness speak.  
 Thou shalt leave all things that most tenderly 55  
 Are loved by thee; and this is from the bow  
 Of exile the first arrow that doth fly.  
 How salt that bread doth taste thou then shalt know  
 That others give thee, and how hard the way  
 Or up or down another's stairs to go. 60  
 And that which most upon thy back shall weigh  
 Will be the mad and evil company  
 Which in that dreary vale with thee shall stay;  
 For they ungrateful, impious, base to thee  
 Shall prove; yet but a little while attend, 65  
 And they, not thou, shall blush for infamy.

<sup>52</sup> *Scart.* quotes an Italian proverb, "*La colpa è sempre degli offesi.*" *Boeth.* i. 4 may have been in Dante's mind, "*Hoc tantum dixerim ultimam esse adversæ fortunæ sarcinam, quod dum miseris aliquod crimen affingitur, quæ perferunt meruisse creduntur.*" Possibly the *væ victis* of Brennus (*Liv.* v. 48) was in Dante's thoughts, or *Ecclus.* xiii. 17. The "vengeance" spoken of may be found either in the great catastrophe of the Ponte Carraia in 1304 (*Vill.* viii. 70), or the defeats referred to in *H.* v. 64-72, or the great fire in the same year (*Vill.* viii. 71). Possibly he may allude more specifically to the death of Simeon, son of Corso Donati, red-handed from a wound inflicted by Niccola de' Cerchi, whom he had attacked and assassinated without provocation (*Vill.* viii. 49).

<sup>55</sup> Even the most sceptical of cynical critics will admit that it is at least possible that Dante may have included wife and children among the things beloved by him. He could hardly, we may add, have referred to house or goods, or the first seven Cantos of the *Commedia* (!). Possibly his "beautiful St. John's" (*H.* xix. 17) may have been also in his thoughts.

<sup>58</sup> No lines in the *Commedia* have been so often in men's mouths as these. Men have found in them a sorrow's crown of sorrow, the very dregs of the cup of bitterness. This was in his mind even when he was an honoured guest in the palaces of Verona or Ravenna. The same thought had been uttered before by Seneca, "*Vita . . . illorum miserrima qui ad alienum somnium dormiunt, et ad aliorum appetitum comedunt et bibunt.*" Possibly also *Ecclus.* xiii. 1-13 may have been verified by Dante's experience.

<sup>62</sup> The six hundred Bianchi-Ghibellines who were sharers of Dante's exile, intriguing, conspiring, self-seeking, with no real loyalty to the Emperor, on the theory of the *Monarchiâ*, were as far as possible from being congenial companions. Among them we may note were the Cerchi (*H.* iii. 35 \*.), the Tosinghi, the Adimari and Lapo Salterello (*C.* xv. 128; *D. C.* ii. p. 273). So Villani (viii. 49) speaks of the Bianchi as "proud and ungrateful," and applies to them the proverb, "*Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*" (*Vill.* viii. 72).

<sup>66</sup> The failure of the plots of the exiles, in which Dante implicitly declares that he had not shared, should make them blush for shame. The words are

And of that brute stupidity their end  
 Shall furnish proof, and well with thee 'twill fare  
 Apart from them thy lonely path to wend.  
 Thy first home, first asylum, shall be there 70  
 Found in the great Lombard's kind courtesy,  
 Whose ladder doth the holy eagle bear.  
 He shall cast on thee so benign an eye  
 That, 'twixt you twain, to ask and act shall take  
 Far other place than elsewhere men descry. 75  
 One too thou'lt see on whom this star did make  
 Such impress when his birth was nigh at hand  
 That his great deeds shall soon men's wonder wake.  
 Not yet his worth the nations understand  
 By reason of his youth, for scarce nine years 80  
 These spheres have round him their full circuit  
 spanned.  
 But ere the Gascon's fraud great Henry nears,  
 Some sparks of valour shall their brightness show,  
 In that he gold contemns nor labour fears.

probably a disclaimer of the attacks which the more desperate Bianchi made on Florence, and in which Dante was accused of being a sharer.

<sup>69</sup> The sense of isolation, from one point of view the bitterest of trials, is from another a source of satisfaction. We remember Dante's words at an earlier stage of his career when he was asked to go as ambassador to Rome: "If I go, who remains? If I remain, who is there to go?" In his aspirations after an ideal monarchy under Henry VII., Dante had probably stood absolutely alone, with the one exception of the Emperor himself.

<sup>71</sup> The "great Lombard" is obviously one of the Scaligeri of Verona, either Albert (*d.* 1301), the father of Bartolomeo (*d.* 1304), Alboin (*d.* 1311), and Francesco, or Can Grande, or one of the three—say most probably Bartolomeo. It has been urged against this that the eagle did not appear on their shields till after the appointment of the last as Imperial Vicar; but the fact is doubtful. Dante could hardly have been mistaken. The eagle, indeed, is not found on the tomb of Can Grande himself. The words imply a visit to Verona in 1302 or 1303. For Dante's first impressions see *Ep.* xi. 1. The thought of l. 74 is from Seneca, *De Benef.*

<sup>76</sup> The stellar influences are recognised again. Can Grande, who is here spoken of, was born when Mars was in the ascendaut. *Comp. H.* xv. 55.

<sup>79</sup> The natural interpretation of the words is that Can Grande was nine years old at the assumed date of the vision, 1300. It has been contended, but on insufficient grounds, that Dante speaks of the biennial revolution of the sphere of Mars, and that Can Grande was therefore born *circa* 1280-81.

<sup>82</sup> The allusion fixes the date of the *Paradiso* as after the first check

And soon so well shall men his greatness know, 85  
     Excelling all, that e'en from enemies,  
     Their silence breaking, shall his praises flow.  
 Wait thou for him and for his charities ;  
     Through him shall many a nation changes see,  
     The rich brought low, the poor to honour rise. 90  
 And written in thy mind this too shall be,  
     Yet tell it not ; " and then he spake of things  
     Which men shall see with incredulity.  
 Then added he, " My son, this issue brings  
     The key to what was told thee : see the snares 95  
     Which a few years shall bear upon their wings.  
 Yet look not on thy mates with envious cares ;  
     Thy life projects itself through many a year  
     Beyond the vengeance which their guilt prepares."  
 When that blest soul by silence showed full clear 100  
     That he had worked with woof the web to fill  
     Which I with warp had set before him there,  
 I then began as one who, doubting still,  
     Desireth counsel for his doubts from one  
     Who sees things justly, loves with heart and will : 105

given to Henry VII., if not, as seems more probable, after his death. The Gascon is Clement V., who first sanctioned Henry's election as King of the Romans, and ostensibly supported his enterprise, and afterwards coalesced with Robert, King of Naples, and the Florentine league against him. Before that time the virtues of Can Grande should begin to show themselves. If we assume Can Grande to have been the "greyhound" of *H. i.* 101, Dante must have seen, with his quick discernment of boy nature, the promise of his future greatness.

89 Probably, like the "greyhound" passage of *H. i.*, an unfulfilled prophecy of a revolution for which Dante hoped, which should substitute his ideal Empire, with its Liberty, Equality, Fraternity (*Mon. i.* 14), for the dominant plutocracy of the Guelph cities and the usurpations of the Roman *Curia*.

92 We note the emphasis of reticence as to the hopes over which the poet's mind was still brooding even in 1318-19, when he wrote the latter part of the *Paradiso*. They were probably connected with Can Grande's appointment as Imperial Vicar in 1318.

95 The decree which banished Dante from Florence has January 7, 1302, for its date. He would live long enough (*C. xxxi.* 37) to see her punished for her malignity. The words may be either a prophecy *ex eventu*, like *l.* 53, or an unfulfilled anticipation.

"Well see I, O my sire, how spurreth on  
 Time's course against me, to strike such a blow  
 As heaviest falls on him whose strength is gone,  
 Wherefore 'tis well foreknowledge arm me so,  
 That, if from home most dear I fain must flee, 110  
 I may not others through my rhymes forego.  
 Down in the world of endless misery,  
 And on the mountain from whose summit bright  
 The eyes of my dear Lady lifted me,  
 And afterwards in Heaven from light to light, 115  
 I have learnt that which, if again I tell,  
 Like herbs of pungent taste, 'twill many bite.  
 Yet if to truth a timid friend I dwell,  
 I fear lest I should lose my life with those  
 Who shall this age as ancient chronicle." 120  
 The light—where, smiling, my own treasure rose  
 New-found—flashed forth at first all glorified,  
 As in the sun's ray golden mirror glows;

108 Forewarned is forearmed. What Dante shrank from was drifting with the stream of circumstance. Was his Master's line floating in his thoughts,

"*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.*"

Line 111 suggests the thought that he had already made enemies by the sharp-pointed satire of the *Commedia*. Might he not be expelled from other cities less dear than Florence, and be altogether homeless? Against that issue he will strive to guard.

112 The words that follow are an *apologia* for the bitterness with which he had spoken in the *Commedia*, not of individuals only, but of communities, as of Siena (*H.* xxix. 121-139), Pistoia (*H.* xxv. 10), Pisa (*H.* xxxiii. 79-90). Might not those verses set every man's hand, and close the gates of every city, against him? Prudence would counsel reticence and suppression (we may, I think, infer that the earlier parts of the poem had not as yet been, in any real sense, published), but then there comes the thought of the immortality of fame. What timid friend of truth ever attained to that?

121 Cacciaguida's answer—that of Dante's higher conscience—is that he must do a prophet's work with a prophet's boldness. "Let the galled jade wince." The sword must smite in order that it might heal. The *Commedia* would invert the parable of St. John's volume (*Rev.* x. 10), and, true to its name, as that name is explained in the *Ep.* to C. G. c. 10, be bitter at first, sweet in its after working. It lies in the nature of the case that such an *apologia* was called forth by definite circumstances. Had it been urged on Dante that he might at least suppress what he had said in *Purg.* xviii. 121-125 of Alberto della Scala's illegitimate son? Was he thus striking at the tallest trees? *Comp. Hor. Od.* ii. 10; *Herod.* vii. 10; *Soph. Œd. R.* 874-878.



Then answer made : " Only a conscience dyed,  
 Or with its own or with another's blame, 125  
 Will feel thy speech grate harshly on its pride;  
 Yet not the less, all falsehood put to shame,  
 Make thou thy vision fully manifest,  
 And where the sore is let each scratch the same.  
 For if thy voice and speech do much molest, 130  
 When tasted first, a vital nutriment  
 'Twill leave behind when men thy words digest.  
 And this thy cry shall like the wind be sent,  
 That most wrecks heights that tower most loftily,  
 Which is of honour no small argument. 135  
 Hence in these spheres there only meet thine eye,  
 As on the Mount and in the dolorous Vale,  
 The souls that have acquired celebrity ;  
 For still the mind of him who hears a tale  
 Rests not, nor gives firm faith to things that rise 140  
 From roots unknown and hid beneath a veil,  
 Nor other proof that non-apparent lies."

*The Sixth Heaven, of Jupiter—The Souls of Righteous Kings  
 —The Starry Eagle*

REJOICING in himself at that his speech  
 Stood that blest Mirror, and I tasting tried  
 The sweet and bitter, tempering each with each ;

<sup>136</sup> The *apologia* is carried farther. It was necessary in all cases to choose prominent examples of the evils which men were to avoid. Only so could the poet point the moral of his tale. This is his defence for passing what seemed to be an irrevocable judgment on individual offenders.

<sup>1</sup> There does not seem any adequate reason for taking "the word" in any other sense (the Word of God, or the inner thought of Cacciaguida) than as that which Dante had heard. His own "word" was obviously an unspoken one. The soul of Cacciaguida is called a mirror (I adopt the reading "*specchio*" rather than "*spirto*") as reflecting the Divine knowledge of the future.

And then that Lady who was still my guide  
 To God, said, "Change thy thoughts, and think  
     that He  
     Who lightens every wrong is at my side."  
 I turned me to that loving melody  
     Of my dear Joy, and what I then saw plain  
     Of love in those pure eyes o'ertasketh me ;  
 Not only that I feel all words are vain,  
     But that my mind doth fail to represent  
     What soars so far, with none to guide the rein.  
 Yet this I can say, and am well content,  
     That, gazing on her, all my strong desire  
     Was free from every baser element.  
 While the eternal joy, whose radiant fire  
     In Beatricè shone direct, did me  
     With reflex bliss from her fair face inspire,  
 She, conquering me with smile all bright to see,  
     Thus spoke to me : "Now turn thyself and hear ;  
     Mine eyes are not sole Paradise for thee."  
 As oft with us affections strong appear  
     Transparent in our looks, if such their might,  
     That all our soul the rapture strong doth share,  
 So in the burning of that holy light  
     To which I turned I did the will descry  
     That me to further converse would invite :

<sup>4</sup> Beatrice confirms the poet's inner thought. God is with him, and will in due time vindicate him from unjust suspicion. The consciousness of her approval brought with it a satisfaction which was, in the strictest sense of the word, ineffable. *Comp. V. N. c. 11.*

<sup>18</sup> The "second," i.e., the transfigured, "aspect" of Beatrice reminds us of *Purg. xxxi. 138.*

<sup>21</sup> What is the meaning of the mysterious sentence? The *Canzone* prefixed to *Conv. iii.*, and the comment on it in *Conv. iii. 8.*, help us to understand it. There the eyes and the smile which make the Paradise of the seeker after wisdom are the demonstrations of Philosophy. Here there is a recantation of that thought. (1) Dante had learnt to find his Paradise in the joy of the higher Wisdom of which Beatrice was the representative. If I mistake not, there is, however, a more personal reference. Beatrice is still *his* Beatrice, and the lesson that he is taught is that Paradise is not found in the contemplation of any human holiness, however perfect, but in the beatific vision with which the *Paradiso* ends (*C. xxxiii. 55-145*).

And he began : " In this fifth stage on high  
 Of tree that from its summit lives and grows,  
 Ne'er sheds its leaf, bears fruit eternally, 30  
 Are blessed spirits who, ere yet they rose  
 To Heaven, were of such renownèd fame  
 As on each Muse abundant store bestows.  
 Look then where meet the Cross's arms of flame,  
 And as from cloud the swift fire darteth by, 35  
 So will each do as I shall speak his name."  
 Athwart the Cross I saw a swift light fly,  
 As he called Joshua's name, nor had the word  
 Passed from his lips ere act had met the eye ;  
 And as the name of Maccabee I heard, 40  
 I saw another move, which circling wound,  
 And gladness was the whip which that top stirred.  
 So as Orlando's, Charlemagne's names did sound,  
 Two more I followed with a keen regard,  
 As the eye follows oft the falcon's round ; 45  
 Then William drew mine eye, and Renouard,  
 And the Duke Godfrey, gazing eagerly  
 Upon that Cross, and Robert named Guiscard.

<sup>28</sup> All Paradise is as the tree of life. The sphere of Mars is its fifth stage. There, in the bright sparks described in *C.* xiv. 109-117 as moving along the arms of the cross, he is taught to recognise the great heroes of the holy wars of all ages—Joshua, Judas Maccabæus, being foremost in the noble army.

<sup>42</sup> The somewhat homely simile is an echo of *Æn.* vii. 378-383.

<sup>43</sup> Charlemagne comes next as the champion of the Church against the Saracens and the Arian Lombards ; Orlando or Roland (*H.* xxxi. 18), his nephew, as the chief among his Paladins.

<sup>45</sup> The poet's love of falconry supplies another image. See notes on *H.* xvii. 127, xxii. 131 ; *Purg.* xix. 64, *et al.*

<sup>46</sup> William, Count of Orange, is said to have fought against the Saracens, and finally to have turned hermit and become famous as St. William of the Desert (*Ott.*). Rinoardo is said to have been a converted Saracen, who afterwards became William's ally. Dante may have drawn his knowledge of them from one of the cyclic poets, represented in Germany by Wolfram von Eschenbach, who wrote of the achievements of the sons of Emmerich of Narbonne, the father of William (*Phil.*). These are followed by Godfrey of Boulogne, the leader of the first Crusade, and Robert Guiscard, son of Tancred de Hauteville, who conquered the Saracens in Apulia and Calabria, and delivered Gregory VII. when he was imprisoned by the Emperor Henry IV. in the Castle of St. Angelo (1074).

Then, mingling with the other lights on high,  
 The soul that thus had spoken bade me learn 50  
 His artist rank 'mong singers of the sky.  
 I to the right hand then myself did turn  
 To look on Beatrice, and thereby  
 By word or act my duty to discern;  
 And in her eyes I saw such brilliancy, 55  
 Such joy, that far that vision left behind  
 All earliest, latest, wont that met mine eye.  
 And as, through feeling pleasure more refined  
 As he does good, a man, from day to day,  
 Perceives that virtue groweth in his mind, 60  
 So I perceived that, as I took my way,  
 Revolving with the Heaven the arc had grown,  
 As I that Wonder saw more light display.  
 And as in one brief moment oft is known  
 The change in pale maid's features when that she 65  
 The weight of shamefast blush aside hath thrown,  
 Such to mine eyes, when I had turned to see,  
 Came that star's glow of tempered lustre bright,  
 That sixth star which within now harboured me.  
 Within that Jovial torch I saw the light, 70  
 The sparkling of the love that there did lie,  
 Trace out our speech before my wondering sight;

<sup>51</sup> Cacciaguida, *i.e.*, resumed his work as a member of the choir of blessed spirits.

<sup>55</sup> The increase of the brightness of Beatrice's eyes corresponds, as before, with the ascent to a higher sphere,—in this instance, to that of Jupiter, the abode of the souls of righteous rulers.

<sup>63</sup> So in *V. N.* c. 21, Beatrice had been described as a "new miracle."

<sup>64</sup> The Heaven of Mars had been fiery red, that of Jupiter is of serenest white. Such is the change from the blush to the normal hue of a fair lady, such as was Beatrice herself (*V. N.* c. 19, 37.) The phrase of "well-attempered star" applied to Jupiter, is found in *Conv.* ii. 14, as resting on the authority of Ptolemy. Jupiter, as the sequel shows, is the planet of righteous government. The relation between it and Saturn, as the planet of contemplation, is recognised by Bacon (*Adv. B.* i. vol. i. p. 17).

<sup>70</sup> "Jovial" is used, of course, with a special reference to its etymology.

And, as the birds that from the shore mount high,  
 As if rejoicing in their pasture-ground,  
 In circle dense or lengthened squadron fly, 75  
 So from within those lights, to song's sweet sound,  
 The holy creatures flew, and soon full clear  
 D, I, and L by them designed I found.  
 First singing sweetly, moved they here and there  
 To their own music, then, as they formed one 80  
 Of those three letters, paused and silent were.  
 O Pegasean Muse, through whom are won  
 The glorious gifts which long-lived praises gain,  
 As they to states and kingdoms pass them on,  
 Illumine me, that I may render plain 85  
 Their figures as they come before my thought,  
 And let thy might these verses few sustain!  
 Then letters fivefold seven in shape they wrought,  
 Both consonants and vowels; and I made  
 Due note of all as they to me were brought. 90  
 "*Diligite justitiam*" first portrayed,  
 Both noun and verb, were seen, as on they passed,  
 "*Qui judicatis terram*" last displayed;  
 Then in the M of that fifth word and last  
 They stood in order, so that Jupiter 95  
 As silver seemed whereon was gold enchased.  
 And other lights descending saw I, where  
 Was the M's apex, then awhile repose,  
 Singing, I deem, the Good that draws them there.

<sup>73</sup> The simile reminds us of *H. v.* 40, 46, 82, as characteristic of the observer of bird-life.

<sup>76</sup> The bright lights form themselves successively into letters which give the *Vulg. of Wisd.* i. 1 as the right motto, so to speak, of the planet which presides over government, remaining in the order which formed the final capital M. Looking on the transformations which follow, we have to

assume a shape like that of the letter M in mediæval MSS. 

<sup>82</sup> The "Pegasean Muse," who gives the long life of fame, is, as in *Purg.* i. 9, Calliope.

<sup>91</sup> The words which Dante saw thus formed find a striking parallel in those which Henry VII. had engraved on his seal, "*Juste judicate, filii hominum.*" Comp. *Ps.* lvii. 2, *Vulg.*

Then, as we strike a firebrand, and there glows 100  
 The soaring flight of sparks innumerable,  
 Which, to the foolish, auguries disclose,  
 So more than thousand lights were visible,  
 Rising and upward leaping, less or more,  
 E'en as the Sun that kindles them did will. 105  
 And when each rested where it was before,  
 I saw an eagle's head and neck appear,  
 Formed by the fire-sparks which that semblance  
 bore.  
 No need has He of guide who traced it there,  
 But Himself guides it, and from Him doth flow 110  
 That power which makes each creature's nest its  
 care.  
 The other blessed troop, which erst did show,  
 Content to be enliled on the M,  
 With gentle movement in that track did go.  
 O thou sweet star! how many a lucid gem 115  
 Then showed me how our justice hath as cause  
 The Heaven which thou with brightness dost ingem.  
 Wherefore I pray the Mind, which of thy laws  
 And power is source, that He should turn His eye  
 Whence comes the smoke that fills thy rays with 120  
 flaws,

<sup>102</sup> One of the popular divinations of Italian peasants was to see in the sparks from a log upon the hearth a prognostic of the number of coins which they would get from any venture in which they were interested.

<sup>107</sup> Other lights crowd upon the summit of the middle line of the **M**, forming (l. 113), an approximation, first, to the *fleur-de-lys* of Florence,

**m**, (l. 113), and finally to the head and wings of an eagle **h**. The order indicates the imperial polity as the ultimate form which was to be dominant over the civil polity of Florence.

<sup>112</sup> "Beatitude" stands obviously as a noun of multitude for the company of blessed spirits, who had seemed content to form the *fleur-de-lys*, but now expanded into a higher symbolism.

<sup>116</sup> The world was governed rightly when it had wise rulers, and the characters of such rulers were formed by the stellar influences of Jupiter working out the Divine Will. C. iv. 58; H. xxii. 15. Comp. H. xv. 55.

That so yet once again His wrath wax high  
 'Gainst those who buy and sell within the shrine  
 Which martyrdoms and wonders fortify.  
 Ye whom I gaze on, knights of court divine,  
 Pray ye for those who yet on earth abide, 125  
 Through bad example all gone out of line.  
 Of yore men fought with sword upon their side;  
 But now, or here or there, they take away  
 Bread the kind Father hath to none denied.  
 And thou who writest but to blot for pay, 130  
 Think thou that Peter and that Paul, who fell  
 For vineyard that thou wastest, live alway.  
 Well canst thou say, "I love the saint so well  
 Whose will it was to live apart from all,  
 Brought by a dance to death-doom terrible, 135  
 That I know not the Fisherman nor Paul."

<sup>121</sup> In contrast with the true order, Dante notes once more the corruption of the Roman Curia, as he had seen it in Rome in 1300, and as it was still to be seen at Avignon when he wrote. What was needed was another expulsion of those that sold and bought in the Temple (*Matt.* xxi. 12; *John* ii. 13).

<sup>128</sup> The words seem to imply something more than a general protest against the lavish use of interdicts and excommunications, which had been so prominent in the conflict between the Popes and the Emperors, or even in the dealings of the former with the citizens of Florence. Had Dante himself been threatened with excommunication for the heresies of the *De Monarchiâ*, which was afterwards placed on the Roman Index of forbidden books?

<sup>130</sup> The invective is addressed to a Pope living, not at the assumed date of the vision, but when the *Paradise* was actually written, probably to John XXII., the Cahorsine (*C.* xxvii. 58). Of all Popes, none were so lavish in their use of spiritual weapons for temporal ends (*Vill.* ix., x., *passim*), none were so conspicuous for their accumulated wealth (*Vill.* xi. 20). The special taunt may refer either to vacillations of policy generally, or to the fact that interdicts and the like were for the most part quickly withdrawn for an adequate consideration.

<sup>134</sup> The image of the Baptist was stamped on the florins coined in Florence and current throughout Italy (*Vill.* vi. 53). This, Dante says, was the object of the Pope's devotion, of which he gave a practical proof by coining gold florins at Avignon exactly like those of Florence, save that on the reverse or lily side he stamped his own name, "Joannes;" but this was in 1323, after Dante's death (*Vill.* ix. 171).

<sup>135</sup> I half incline to think that the mention of "dances" may be an oblique hit at the lascivious banquets of the Avignon prelates described by Petrarch (*Milm. L. C.* vii. 152). To the Baptist those dances brought martyrdom. There was no risk of that with his namesake.

<sup>136</sup> For the "Fisherman" see *Purg.* xxii. 63. The form "*Polo*" in the

*The Eagle on the Conditions of Salvation—The Hope of the  
Heathen—Condemnation of Unrighteous Kings*

THEN met my gaze, with outspread open wing,  
That image fair which to fruition sweet  
The joyous souls enwreathed in it doth bring,  
And each a ruby seemed, in which did meet  
A ray of sunshine, burning with such glow 5  
That in mine eyes there shone reflected heat.  
And that which now behoves that men should know,  
No voice e'er uttered and no ink e'er wrote,  
Nor e'er did phantasy such wonder show; 10  
I saw, yea, heard, the bird's beak speak in note  
That sounded, as it spake, of *I* and *Mine*,  
While *We* and *Our* were meant in inner thought.  
And it began: "Here I in glory shine,  
Raised high, as just and holy in my ways,—  
Glory, beyond the soul's desire, divine; 15  
And I on earth have record left of praise,  
So gained that e'en the evil troop of foes  
Commends, though from the example still it strays."  
As the same heat in many embers glows,  
So there, though many loves those souls did hold, 20  
One only utterance from that form arose.

Italian, for "*Paolo*," is said to be Venetian, as in Marco Polo. Was Dante reproducing a like Gascon or Provençal form? or does he simply yield to the exigencies of rhyme? The two Apostles were, it must be remembered, the patron Saints of Rome.

<sup>2</sup> The fair image is that of the eagle of C. xviii. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Dante, like the seer of the Apocalypse (*Rev.* iv. 3, xxi. 19-21), has a special fondness for images from jewels (C. xv. 85, xxx. 66-76; *Purg.* vii. 75, xxix. 125).

<sup>8</sup> An echo at once of *1 Cor.* ii. 9 and *John* xxi. 25.

<sup>12</sup> The eagle form was made up of many souls, and therefore its thoughts, though uttered in the singular, were the thoughts of many.

<sup>15</sup> The words admit of two constructions: (1) "which does not let itself be surpassed by desire;" (2) "which does not let itself be won at man's wish." I prefer the latter, as echoing *Matt.* vii. 21; *2 Tim.* ii. 5.

<sup>18</sup> The memory is that of the many wise and just rulers of Rome enumerated in *Mon.* ii. 4, 5. Their praise had become the commonplace of rhetoric, but few followed their example.



Then I began: "O flowers that wax not old,  
 Of joy eternal, who in very deed  
 Blend into one all odours manifold,  
 By your words let me from that fast be freed 25  
 Which long hath held me with its hungry pain,  
 Finding on earth no food that met my need.  
 Well know I, if in Heaven God's righteous reign  
 Another realm makes mirror of its own,  
 Yours sees, without a veil, all clear and plain. 30  
 How eager I to hear to you is known,  
 Is known the form and fashion of the doubt  
 Through which my soul so long hath fasting gone."  
 As falcon from his hood just issuing out, 35  
 Moving his head and fluttering either wing,  
 In eager will and beauty flits about,  
 So I saw that sign act whose fashioning  
 Was framed of many praises of God's grace,  
 In songs which joy on high best knows to sing. 40  
 Then it began: "He who the extent of space  
 Marked with His compass, and within the bound  
 Set secret things and open face to face,  
 Could not His power so print on all around,  
 Through the whole world, as that the Word Eterne 45  
 Should not in infinite excess abound.  
 And this from that first proud one we may learn,  
 Who was the sum of all created good,  
 And fell half-ripe, not waiting light to earn.

<sup>23</sup> The voices of the souls are as the odours of the flowers. There may be a reminiscence of *Purg.* vii. 80, or *Song of Sol.* i. 3.

<sup>28</sup> If elsewhere in Heaven the Divine justice finds a mirror, how much more in Jupiter. There is a singularly interesting touch of autobiography in the confession that the doubt which the poet is about to utter was one of long standing.

<sup>34</sup> Once more a falcon simile. See note on C. xviii. 45.

<sup>40</sup> An echo of *Job* xxxviii. 4; *Prov.* viii. 27; reproduced by Milton, *P. L.* vii. 224.

<sup>46</sup> Comp. the account of the fall of Lucifer in *H.* xxxiv. 18; *Purg.* xii. 26. Impatience mingled with his pride. He would not wait for glory, but clutched at it prematurely. Comp. *Phil.* ii. 6, *R. V.*

And thus it seems all life of lower mood  
 Is but a vessel all too small to hold 50  
 The good, self-measured, in Infinitude.  
 Whence this our vision, wherein we behold,  
 Perforce, a ray of that Supremest Mind  
 Which all things in its fulness doth enfold,  
 Cannot of its own nature such power find 55  
 But that it sees its origin confest,  
 Leave all that is apparent far behind.  
 Wherefore into the Justice ever blest  
 The vision which your world receives, no more  
 Can enter than the eye in ocean's breast, 60  
 Which, though it see the bottom near the shore,  
 Far out at sea beholds not; yet 'tis there,  
 But the deep waters hide it evermore.  
 Light there is none, unless from out the clear  
 And cloudless fount, nay, 'tis but darkness all, 65  
 Mist from the flesh, or bane that brings death near.  
 So now more open to thee is the pall  
 That kept the living Justice from thy view,  
 For which so often questioning thou didst call:  
 For thou didst say, 'A man his first breath drew 70  
 On Indus' banks, and there were none to tell  
 Of Christ, or write or read the doctrine true;

<sup>55</sup> The finite mind must, in the nature of the case, be incapable of measuring the Infinite. On the shore, where the water is shallow, we see the bottom, but God's judgments are as the "great deep" (*Ps.* xxxv. 6), and there we see not His righteousness, though we believe that it is there.

<sup>64</sup> Man has no light except from God, and the natural darkness of the mind comes either from the necessary limitations of man's fleshly life or from the poison of sensuality. *Æn.* vi. 733; *Wisd.* ix. 15; *Matt.* vi. 22, 23; *James* i. 17, and *Rev.* xxi. 23 may have been in Dante's thoughts.

<sup>70</sup> The long-standing doubt is that which even the theologians of Rome (*Spirits in Prison*, pp. 160-187) have solved in the direction of the "wider hope." How can the justice of God be reconciled with the condemnation of the heathen who have sought righteousness, and yet have lived and died without baptism and in ignorance of the faith? Dante has no other solution than that of man's incapacity to measure the Divine justice (comp. *C.* xiii. 130-142). It would be a miracle if Scripture presented no such problems. Man must believe that God is good and righteous in all His ways. If Dante does not go beyond this, we must remember that he at least placed the righteous heathen in a state in which there was only the pain of unsatisfied desire (*H.* iii. iv.). This passage shows that even that

And he in every wish and deed lives well,  
 As far as human reason may descry,  
 And sinless doth in life and speech excel. 75  
 He without baptism, without faith, doth die;  
 Where is the justice then that damns for it?  
 Where is his guilt if he the faith deny?'  
 Nay, who art thou who on the bench dost sit  
 To judge, with thy short vision of a span, 80  
 The thousand miles that stretch indefinite?  
 For one who thus to subtilise began  
 With me, if Scripture were not o'er you set,  
 A wondrous range of doubt were given the man.  
 O earthly souls, O minds so carnal yet! 85  
 That primal Will which is the Good Supreme  
 Ne'er from Itself endured or change or let.  
 What with It doth accord we just may deem:  
 No good created draws It down, but still,  
 As causing that, It pours its radiant beam." 90  
 As round her nest the stork doth whirl at will,  
 When she hath fed her young, and as the gaze  
 Of nestling that of food hath had its fill,  
 So acted, e'en as I mine eyes did raise,  
 That blessed image, moving either wing, 95  
 By many thoughts impelled in wondrous ways.  
 And, so revolving, it ceased not to sing:  
 "As these notes are to thee, thus dull of ear,  
 So ways eterne to man's imagining."  
 Then resting, those bright lights that vessels were 100  
 Of God the Holy Spirit, formed again  
 The sign which made the world great Rome revere,

conclusion troubled him with doubts. It is significant that his yearning after a wider hope grows stronger with his deepening faith towards the close of life. Comp. 1 *Tim.* i. 15, ii. 4; *Tit.* iii. 4.

<sup>91</sup> The eagle form represents, it will be remembered, the wisdom of all who had been most conspicuous in their love of justice. The simile of the stork is one which might have met Dante's eyes in any city in Italy.

<sup>98</sup> The words spoken by the eagle seem clear enough; what Dante did not understand was how the one voice could be the utterance of the many souls.

And recommenced: "None rose to this domain  
 Save him alone who did believe in Christ,  
 Before or since He bore the cross and pain. 105  
 But look how many cry 'O Christ, O Christ!'  
 Who at the judgment shall much farther be  
 From Him than some who have not known the  
 Christ.

Such Christians judged by Æthiops we shall see.  
 Then, when the two bands take their separate way, 110  
 One rich, one poor, for all eternity,  
 What to your kings might not yon Persians say,  
 When they shall see that volume open wide  
 In which their vile deeds stand in full array?  
 Shall there be seen, 'mong Albert's deeds descried, 115  
 That which ere long shall move the pen to write,  
 For which shall lie waste Prague's dominion wide.  
 Shall there be seen the trouble and despite  
 The false coin-maker brings upon the Seine,  
 Whom wild boar's tusk ere long to death shall  
 smite. 120

Shall there be seen the pride that thirsts for gain,  
 Which drives the Scot and Englishman so mad  
 That neither can within his bounds remain.

103 One aspect of the Divine justice can at least be made prominent. The nominal worshippers of Christ (we note the triple rhyme again, as in C. xii. 71-75, xiv. 104-108) shall be worse off than those who have not known Him (*Matt.* vii. 21; *Luke* xii. 47).

112 The Æthiop may be chosen (*Ps.* lxviii. 31) with reference to the Eunuch of *Acts* viii. 27. Was there any special reason for choosing the Persians as representative types of the righteous? Was Dante thinking of Cyrus, or of modern kings, of whom, as of Zenghis Khan, the monarch of Cathay, he may have heard through Marco Polo?

115 The passage which follows, as a survey of contemporary politics, is parallel to *Purg.* vi. 76-151. The Emperor Albert of Hapsburg in 1304 invaded Bohemia and took Prague by storm. "The pen" is that which records man's guilt in the book of God's remembrance.

118 The crimes of Philip the Fair against Boniface VIII. and the Templars had been named in *Purg.* xx. 85-93, xxxii. 156. Here he is charged with falsifying the coin of his realm (*Vill.* viii. 58). The last line is a prophecy *ex eventu* of the manner of Philip's death in 1314.

121 The interest taken in a matter so remote from Italian politics as the wars of Edward I. and II. with Scotland lends some colour to the tradition that Dante had visited England. (*Comp. Hell*, note 118, p. 91.) He apparently

Seen shall be there the life, vile, soft, and bad,  
 Of him of Spain and of Bohemia's son,  
 Who virtue never sought and never had. 125  
 Seen shall be there the 'I' that stands for one  
 Good deed o' the Cripple of Jerusalem,  
 While 'M' shall mark what otherwise was done.  
 Seen shall be there the baseness and the greed 130  
 Of him who tamely keeps the fiery isle,  
 Where from long toil was old Anchises freed:

condemns both sides as equally encroaching. As Edward I. is praised in *Purg.* vii. 132, it is probable that he refers to Edward II. and Bannockburn (1314). The Anglo-Scotch wars receive constant notice from Villani (ix. 138, 161, 180). A document is extant (Maitland Club, *Wallace Papers*, p. xix., edited by Rev. J. Stevenson, who found it among the Records of the Tower of London), in which Philip the Fair commends Wallace (William le Walois) to the French envoys at the Court of Rome, and urges them to persuade the Pope (Boniface VIII.) to enter into his views. The letter is dated in November 1299. If it was acted on, Wallace was in all probability at Rome in the early months of the year of Jubilee, and he and Dante may have met there. Three Scotch ecclesiastics came to Rome in that year and obtained a Bull which stopped Edward I. as he was on the threshold of a new invasion. See also Lowe's *Edin. Mag.*, i. pp. 208-209.

125 The king of Spain is probably Ferdinand IV., king of Castile (1295-1312), who took Gibraltar from the Moors, and unjustly put to death the brothers of the house of Carvajal, one of whom, after the manner of the Grand Master of the Templars, who addressed a like summons to Philip the Fair as he marched to execution, cited the King to appear before the judgment-seat of God within thirty days. Before the end of that period the King died. Alphonso X. (the Wise, 1252-84), who, like Celestine V., was guilty of a *gran rifiuto* in declining the Empire, and his son Sancho, have had their advocates among commentators. The king of Bohemia is Wenceslaus IV. Comp. *Purg.* vii. 101.

127 The cripple is Charles II. of Naples, living in 1300, and succeeded by his third son, Robert, in 1309 (comp. C. viii. 146), the house of Anjou taking the title of king of Jerusalem, which went with the crown of the two Sicilies. In C. viii. 82 he is praised for his liberality, in which, it would seem, Dante saw his only virtue. The M stands, of course, for 1000. In *Conv.* iv. 6 Dante addresses Charles in terms of strong rebuke. Comp. *Purg.* xx. 79.

130 The island of fire is Sicily. He who guards it is Frederick II., king of Sicily, the degenerate son of Peter of Aragon (*Purg.* vii. 119). In *V. E.* i. 12 avarice is noted as his besetting sin, and he is contrasted (though other writers speak of him as a man of letters, knowing his Bible and Virgil by heart) with the Emperor Frederick II. and Manfred. At one time, if we may trust the Ilarian letter, Dante intended to dedicate the *Paradise* to him.

132 *Æn.* iii. 707 places the death of Anchises, the father of Æneas, at Drepanum (*Trapani*).

And to show well how mean he is and vile,  
 The writing shall in letters maimed be shown,  
 Which, noting much, are read in little while. 135  
 And there to each the foul deeds shall be known  
 Of uncle and of brother, who on race  
 So noble and two crowns such shame have thrown.  
 And Norway's king and Portugal's their space  
 Shall fill, and he Ragusa owns as king, 140  
 Who on the coin of Venice brought disgrace.  
 O blessed Hungary, if to her men bring  
 No further mischief; and O blest Navarre,  
 Were she well armed with that her mountain ring!

<sup>133</sup> The thought seems to be that the faults of Frederick were so many that it would be necessary to use abbreviations, such as were common in mediæval MSS., to record them all. That was all that he deserved.

<sup>137</sup> The uncle is James, king of the Balearic Isles, son of James I. of Aragon. He is reproached with cowardice in having allowed Majorca to be taken from him by his brother. The brother of Frederick is James II. of Aragon, who, on the death of Peter, took that kingdom, leaving Sicily to his brother Alphonso. The latter died without issue in 1291 (*Purg.* vii. 115), and James seized on his dominions, against the claims of his younger brother, Frederick, and so reduced Sicily to the position of a province.

<sup>139</sup> The king of Portugal is Dionysius Agricola (1279-1325), whom national historians praise for his encouragement of commerce. To Dante it seemed, probably, that he sought only for material wealth, and abandoned the task of clearing the Peninsula from the Moors (*Phil.*).

The absolute ignorance of all the early commentators as to "the Norwegian" is the best illustration of the wide range of Dante's historical knowledge. Later critics vary in their conjectures: (1) Magnus Logobatters (1263-80), said to have been conspicuous for a "peace at any price" policy, inconsistent with the ideal heroism of a true king; (2) Eric (1280-1300); (3) Hakon the Longlegged (1300-19). The two last were brothers, and where engaged in constant wars with Denmark. I incline to (2) or (3), as coming more within the horizon of Dante's outlook.

<sup>140</sup> Light is thrown on this allusion by a decree in the *Liber Aureus* of Venice (1282), ordering an inquiry into the conduct of Stephen Uroscius I., king of Rascia, whose territory included Illyria and Dalmatia, in issuing coins of debased metal, bearing the stamp of the denari and ducats of Venice.

<sup>142</sup> Andrew III., the last king of the line of St. Stephen, had reigned 1290-1301. He was succeeded by Charles Robert (or Umberto), the son of Charles Martel, Dante's friend (*Par.* viii. 55), who had been himself crowned as king of Hungary in Naples in Andrew's lifetime (1295), claiming the succession through his mother, as daughter of Stephen V., but had never been in actual possession of the kingdom. Unless the words are ironical, Dante looked on him as inheriting his father's virtues (*C.* viii. 49-84). He is described as one "of great worth and valour" (*Vill.* xii. 6).

<sup>143</sup> Navarre had passed by the marriage of Jeanne, daughter of Henry I. of Navarre, with Philip the Fair (1284) to the house of Valois, and on the

And as an earnest of my truth there are  
 Nicosia, Famagosta, to attest,  
 Whose cry of grief and anger sounds afar,  
 Through that vile beast who follows with the rest.

145

*The Eagle's Praises of Righteous Kings—William the Good—  
 Rhipeus—Trajan*

WHEN he who doth o'er all the world shed light  
 To sink beneath our hemisphere is seen,  
 And day all round us slowly fades in night,  
 The sky, till then lit only by his sheen,  
 As in an instant is with lustre fraught,  
 With many lights, in all one light serene.  
 This aspect of the heavens I had in thought,  
 When that great symbol of the world and those  
 Who rule it, in that blest beak silence wrought ;

death of the latter in 1314, her son, Louis Hutin, took the title of king of France and Navarre. Dante's antipathy to France shows itself in the thought that Navarre would have been happy had the Pyrenees been a real, as well as a geographical, barrier protecting it from France.

<sup>146</sup> Nicosia and Famagosta were the two chief cities of Cyprus, governed by Henry II. of the French dynasty of Lusignan. What had taken place there (we again note the extent of the range of Dante's political sympathies) was a sample of what might be expected from French domination in Navarre. Such a king Dante can only describe as a beast (possibly with reference to the lion on the Lusignan shield) consorting with his mates. The close connection between Cyprus and Genoa, which appointed a Podestà for the government of the island, sufficiently explains how it came within Dante's horizon. After a war extending over some years, Famagosta fell into the actual occupation of the Genoese for about seventy years. There was also a considerable commerce carried on with Cyprus both by Pisa and Florence. The house of Bardi, in particular, was connected with negotiations for ransoming prisoners who had been taken by the Turks (Rev. R. F. McCleod). Their range of operations must have been sufficiently extensive.

<sup>1</sup> The sun was thought of in mediæval astronomy as the source of light to the fixed stars as well as to the planets (*Conv.* ii. 14, iii. 12). As is the sun by day to the starry host at night, which also derives its light from him, so was the single voice from the beak of the eagle to the chorus that followed. That chorus the poet listened to with a rapture which could not reproduce it, and then the solo was resumed.

For then those lights, whose living brightness rose 10  
To greater glory, strain of song began,  
Which, fading, gliding, far from memory flows.  
O gentle Love, who in thy smiles art drest,  
How ardent in those pipes didst thou then show,  
Which thoughts inspired that holiest were and  
best ! 15  
And when those jewels, bright with loving glow,  
Wherewith I saw ingemmed the sixth bright star,  
Had silenced of those angel chimes the flow,  
Methought I heard a murmuring stream afar,  
Which falleth, crystal clear, from stone to stone, 20  
Showing how full its mountain sources are.  
And as the cithern's music takes its tone  
Within its neck, or as, through open way,  
The wind through bagpipe's orifice is blown,  
So, far removed from waiting or delay, 25  
That murmur rose up in the eagle's throat,  
As though from hollow place 'twere made to play.  
There it took voice, and issued in a note  
That in its beak formed words articulate,  
Dear to my heart, whereon those words I wrote. 30  
"That part in me whose glance doth contemplate  
The sun, in mortal eagles," so it spake,  
" 'Tis meet thou scan with look deliberate ;  
Since, of the fires whereof my form I make,  
Those in my head that sparkle in mine eye 35  
Of all their ranks the loftiest places take.

14 A v. L gives "sparks" instead of "pipes ;" but Comp. xiii. 8.

22 We note the similitude characteristic of the student of music, like that of the organ in C. xvii. 44 ; *Purg.* ix. 144.

31 In the eagle's eye the gazer is to see six of the most conspicuous examples of righteous rule. (1) David. Of the *v. ll. effetto* and *affetto* (l. 41), I adopt the former. From one point of view the merit of David's song belonged to the spirit who dictated it, not to him, but there was also a self-consecration to the work which sprung from his own choice, and that from the scholastic standpoint was meritorious. Was there a half-consciousness in the poet that the same merit might be claimed by him as a sharer in the Psalmist's gift of song ?



He who as pupil shines, placed centrally,  
 Was the sweet Psalmist of the Holy Spirit,  
 Who bade the Ark from town to town pass by ;  
 And now he knows of his own song the merit,  
 So far as in it his own thought was shown,  
 By the reward, as great, he doth inherit.  
 Of five who circle round my brow, this one,  
 Who to my beak hath ta'en his post most near,  
 Consoled the widow weeping for her son ;  
 Now doth he know full well the cost how dear  
 Christ not to follow, through experience  
 Of this sweet life, and of its contrast drear.  
 He who stands next in that circumference  
 Of which I speak, upon the upper line,  
 Postponed his death by his true penitence ;  
 Now doth he know that fixed decrees divine  
 Change not, although when worthy prayer doth  
 seek,  
 They may to-morrow for to-day assign.  
 The next, with good intentions all too weak,  
 Bore evil fruit ; himself, me, and the laws,  
 Through yielding to the Pope, he changed to Greek ;  
 Now knows he how the harm, whereof the cause  
 Was found in his good deed, works him no ill,  
 Though on the world much hurt and harm it  
 draws.

<sup>43</sup> Of the five who form the brow round the eyeball, we have Trajan. For the history of the widow, comp. *Purg.* x. 75.

<sup>49</sup> (2) Hezekiah. Comp. 2 *Kings* xx. ; *Isai.* xxxviii. Each example teaches its own lesson. In this instance it is seen that prayer prevails to delay, but not to avert, the righteous punishment of sins. So Aquin. *Summ.* ii. 2. 83, 2.

<sup>55</sup> (3) Constantine, not without a renewed lamentation over the traditional Donation (C. vi. 1 ; *H.* xix. 115 ; xxvii. 94).

<sup>57</sup> Constantine became a Greek by removing to Byzantium, and so leaving Rome in the hands of the Popes. The lesson here is that God accepts the will for the deed, and does not punish a mistake in judgment, however disastrous its results.

Then he who on the sloping arc doth fill  
 His place was William, whom that land laments  
 Which mourns for Charles and Frederick living still;  
 Now doth he know how Heaven in love consents  
 With righteous kings, and by the outward show 65  
 Of his great brightness still clear proof presents.  
 Who would believe in that blind world below  
 That Trojan Rhipeus here would e'er be found  
 Fifth of the holy lights in this our bow?  
 Now enough knows he what the world around 70  
 Cannot discern of God's great grace on high,  
 Though e'en his glance scans not the deep  
 profound."

As is a lark that cleaves at will the sky,  
 First singing loud, then silent in content,  
 With that last sweetness that doth satisfy, 75

<sup>61</sup> (4) William II. of Sicily (*b.* 1153, *d.* 1189), surnamed the Good. Recorded facts of his history are few, but *Phil.* quotes some Latin verses from a popular poem which show the popular estimate of his character, and which may have come to Dante's knowledge—

" *Rex Gulielmus abiit, non obiit,  
 Rex ille, magnificus, pacificus,  
 Cujus vita placuit Deo et hominibus,  
 Ejus semper spiritus Deo vivat cœlitus.*"

The epitaph on his tomb was at first simply

" *Hic situs est bonus rex Gulielmus,*"

but this was afterwards replaced by a more elaborate inscription.

<sup>63</sup> Charles is the Cripple of Jerusalem of *C.* xix. 127, *Purg.* xx. 79; Frederick II. the King of Sicily of *C.* xix. 131, *Purg.* vii. 119. Men groaned under their tyranny. They lamented the loss of William the Good (*Kingt.* i. 22).

<sup>67</sup> Rhipeus is placed in Paradise in accordance with *Æn.* ii. 426—

" *Cadit et Rhipeus, justissimus unus,  
 Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui.*"

It would seem as if Dante was scarcely satisfied even with his own answer to the question which he had himself formulated (*C.* xix. 70-114), and was determined to show that the gates of Heaven were open to some, at least, of the righteous heathen. Line 72 contains a distinct reference to *C.* xix. 61. There may be also, as Butler suggests, an allusion to the *Dis aliter visum* which follows the passage just quoted. Even Virgil had been unable to see behind the veil, and had therefore thought the ways of God unequal.

<sup>73</sup> English readers may be reminded of the apparently unconscious parallel of Shelley's poem on the "Skylark."

<sup>74</sup> The souls of the righteous rest in the sweetness of contemplating the Divine righteousness, as the lark rests on the sweetness of its own song.

So seemed to me the image there imprinted  
 Of that eternal joy which as each will  
 Desires it, stamps the fashion of its bent.  
 And, though I was to doubt that did me fill  
 As glass to colour that encoated lies, 80  
 It could not wait in silence, patient still,  
 But from my mouth "What things are these?" did rise,  
 Forced from me by the pressure of its weight;  
 Whereat great joy, bright flashing, met mine eyes.  
 And thereupon, with look yet more elate, 85  
 That ever-blessed symbol made reply,  
 That I might not in eager wondering wait,  
 "I see that thou believest, in that I  
 Have said these things, but 'how' thou dost not see,  
 So that, although believed, they hidden lie. 90  
 Thou dost as one who knows by name what he  
 Beholds, and yet their inmost being's sense  
 Fails to discern unless a guide there be.  
*Regnum cælorum* suffereth violence  
 From fervent love and ever-living hope, 95  
 Which conquers e'en the will of Providence;  
 Not as a man with man in power doth cope,  
 But conquers, since It wills to be o'ercome,  
 And conquered,—conquers by its love's wide scope.

<sup>76</sup> The eagle, as the symbol of the Empire, is the symbol also of the eternal joy to the working out of which the Empire is, in its idea, subservient. Men are what they are in proportion as they desire that joy.

<sup>80</sup> The artist nature is seen in the allusion to the methods of the workers in stained glass, who, for their ruby, coated the glass with a film of the desired colour, the other colours being in "pot-metal," *i.e.*, in the glass itself (*Bull.*). Compare *Petrarch*, *Canz.* iii. 4.

<sup>82</sup> The question implies wonder, and the wonder is that Trajan or Rhipeus is in Paradise. Dante had believed the fact, but did not see the reason, as men call a thing by its right name without knowing its *quiddity*, *i.e.*, in the language of the schools, cannot define it philosophically.

<sup>94</sup> In the words of *Matt.* xi. 12, *Luke* xvi. 16, Dante finds an opening for the wider hope. As in the case of the woman of Canaan, the Divine will was willing to be conquered by the will of man, and so became more than conqueror. A grace of congruity, though not of condignity (*Aquin. Summ.* i. 2, 114, 1), was granted even to some among the heathen. The Thirty-Nine Articles will have made English Churchmen familiar with the distinction (*Art.* 13).

The first life and the fifth that have their home 100  
 Within my brow amaze thee, in that they  
 Adorn the regions where the angels roam;  
 Not, as thou deem'st, they left their mortal clay  
 Heathens, but Christians, strong in faith to see,  
 Or the pierc'd feet, or else the pierc'd feet's day, 105  
 Beheld far off; for one from Hell, where free  
 Path to good-will is none, with flesh was clad,  
 That so of lively hope reward might be;  
 Of lively hope, which put forth prayer that had  
 Power to obtain that God his soul would raise, 110  
 So that his will might turn to good from bad.  
 The glorious soul of whom I tell the praise,  
 Returning to his flesh for briefest hour,  
 Believed in Him who could direct his ways,  
 And so, believing, glowed with fiery power 115  
 Of love so true, that when he died once more,  
 He was thought worthy of this blissful bower.  
 The other, through the grace which still doth pour  
 From fount so deep that no created eye  
 Its primal wave hath ever dared explore, 120

103 The solution of the problem is, however, made to rest on the special circumstances of the individual instances. Trajan was released from Hell and received the truth that saves, and so was in Paradise as a Christian. Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. *Suppl.* 71, 5) hovers between the two views, one of which looked on the existence of Trajan as a leading case which might be true of others ("de omnibus talibus similiter dici oportet"), while the other held that the punishment of Trajan was only suspended till the day of judgment. The latter view Dante emphatically rejects. Trajan had been placed in a position in which the prayers of Christians for his soul availed as for the souls of Christians. The popularity of the story is shown by its being found in the *Golden Legend*, with this suggestive conclusion:—"By thys (*sc.* Gregory's intercession) as somme saye, the payne perpetuell due to Trajan as a miscreant (*i.e.*, unbeliever) was some dele taken away, but for all that he was not quyte fro the prison of Helle; for the sowle may well be in Helle, and fele ther no payne, by the mercy of God."

116 The "second death" (*Ital.*) for the state of the souls is clearly used in a different sense from that which the words bear in *Rev.* ii. 11, xx. 6, and as Dante uses them in *H.* i. 117, and *Ep.* vi. 2, and stands for the death which followed a temporary return to earthly life.

118 We note the use of the same image as in *C.* xix. 61. There are unfathomable depths in the Divine compassion as well as in the Divine judgments.

Turned all his love below to justice high,  
 Wherefore from grace to grace God opened wide  
 His vision to redemption drawing nigh;  
 So in it he believed, nor could abide  
 Thenceforth the foul stench of the pagan's creed,<sup>125</sup>  
 And so reproved the stubborn heathen's pride.  
 And those three Maidens met his baptism's need,  
 Those whom thou sawest at the right-hand wheel,  
 A thousand years ere baptism was decreed.  
 O grace predestined, how thou dost conceal<sup>130</sup>  
 Thy secret root from every mortal eye  
 That sees not what the First Cause doth reveal!  
 And ye, O mortals, judge not hastily,  
 For even we, who look on God's own face,  
 The number of the elect not yet descry;<sup>135</sup>  
 And in this lack we find sweet gift of grace,  
 For all our good in this Good finds its goal,  
 And what God wills, our will too doth embrace."

<sup>121</sup> As in the case of Statius, Dante assumes for Rhipeus—here, also, perhaps, as a leading case—a special Divine revelation of the coming redemption. So Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2. 2, 7) admits that "*multis gentiliū facta fuit revelatio de Christo*," if not explicitly of the mode of redemption, yet of the truth that God would not leave mankind to perish unredeemed.

<sup>127</sup> An implicit faith may thus be accepted where explicit faith is wanting; so faith, hope, and charity may be attained without baptism, and supply its place. From Dante's standpoint this did not involve any recognition of merit in man's natural righteousness beyond that of assenting to the first motions of the supernatural light. It was still the grace of God that worked from first to last—from grace to grace. So Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 66, 11, 68. 2), and even Augustine (*De Bapt. c. Don.* iv. 22), admit that the lack of baptism may be supplied either by martyrdom, or by the wish for baptism when it cannot be had, or by the faith working by love which is not tied to visible ordinances.

<sup>130</sup> The doctrine of predestination is recognised by Dante, as it was by Augustine and Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 23, 2, iii. 24, 1), but so that it does not clash with man's freedom and responsibility. Dante deals with it in the temper of *Art.* xvii. of the English Church, and of the Royal Declaration prefixed to the Articles. Men must be silent and adore, refrain from judging others, and from presuming on their own election. We know not—not even the souls of the blest know—the number of God's elect, nor who they are, and can only judge approximately by what we see of men's works and characters. The seeming tares may be really wheat—may be capable of development into wheat; the seeming wheat may degenerate into tares, or turn out to have been tares from the first. Such ignorance is better for us than knowledge, for the best discipline for our minds is that they should will what God wills in the belief that that will is absolutely righteous and

So from that godlike image to my soul,  
 To remedy my dim and feeble sight, 140  
 Sweet medicine was given that made me whole.  
 And as skilled hand to one who sings aright  
 Adjusts the harmonious tremor of his string,  
 So that the song acquires the more delight,  
 Thus, while it spake, as memory back doth bring 145  
 What met mine eyes, I saw those glories twain,  
 With one accord, like two eyes opening,  
 Their flamelets move in measure with the strain.

## CANTO XXI

*The Seventh Heaven, of Saturn—The Star-Ladder of  
 Contemplation—St. Peter Damian*

ALREADY were mine eyes fixed on the face  
 Of my dear Lady, and with them my mind,  
 Nor for aught else was found there any place;

oving. Dante's answer to man's questionings is like Ezekiel's (*Ezek.* xviii. 25). Comp. C. xiii. 130-142.

<sup>139</sup> We note Dante's acceptance of the limitations of man's knowledge as entirely in harmony with Butler's sermon on "The Ignorance of Man." To be reminded of those limits is the very medicine which he needs to calm the fever of doubt.

<sup>142</sup> The simile, like those of l. 22, C. xvii. 24, *Purg.* ix. 144, reminds us that music also was one of Dante's studies.

<sup>146</sup> Trajan and Rhipheus glow with brightness in the joy of thinking that they have been chosen as objects of the Divine Love—representative instances, as it were, of the power and will of that Love to pass beyond the normal limitations which it has imposed upon itself.

It is suggestive, comparing this Canto with *H.* iii. iv., that the wider hope becomes clearer as Dante reaches the conclusion of his poem and nears that of his life. One traces something of a like development in the teaching of St. Paul as we compare 1 and 2 *Tim.* with 1 and 2 *Thess.* I may perhaps be permitted, as having in this matter sat at the feet of Dante and other like-minded masters of Israel, to refer to what I have written in the *Spirits in Prison*, ch. vi. on the "Salvation of the Heathen."

<sup>1</sup> The new brightness of Beatrice's eyes implies another ascent. We are now in the sphere of Saturn, the abode of the spirits that have given themselves to the life of contemplation. The full joys of that life, symbolised by Beatrice's smile, would be more than mortal strength could bear. There must be a reticence in the very raptures of the mystic. To seek those joys now is to act like Semele, who rashly desired to see the glory of Jupiter,

Yet she smiled not. "Nay, if I smile could find,"  
 So she began, "thou would'st like Semele 5  
 Become, when she to ashes was consigned;  
 For this my beauty grows, as thou dost see,  
 Brighter the higher we ascend the stair  
 Of this great palace of Eternity;  
 Were it not tempered, 'twould shine forth so fair 10  
 That thy frail mortal strength before its beam,  
 As branch before the levin-brand, would fare.  
 Now have we risen to the seventh star's gleam,  
 Whence, now beneath the burning Lion's breast,  
 An influence blent with his doth downward stream. 15  
 Now fix thy mind there where thine eyes do rest,  
 And make them as a mirror to the sign  
 Which in that mirror shall be manifest."  
 He who should know what joy of heart was mine,  
 My glad eyes feeding on those features fair, 20  
 When my thoughts bore me on another line,  
 Would know what full contentment was my share,  
 Obedience yielding to my heavenly guide,  
 Could he with equal scale the two compare.  
 Within the crystal sphere which circles wide 25  
 Around the world, and bears a monarch's name,  
 Under whose rule lay dead all guilt and pride,  
 Of golden hue, transmitting ray of flame,  
 I saw a ladder, rising up so high  
 That it my keenest vision overcame. 30

and perished in the blaze of his lightnings (*Met.* iii. 253-315). It is characteristic of Dante's classicalism, that this illustration occurs to him, and that of Moses in *Exod.* xxxiii. 20 does not.

<sup>13</sup> Without entering into details, we note that Dante describes the position of Saturn, as seen in the constellation Leo in the Easter-tide of 1300. There probably is a mystic meaning in the fact. Saturn, the cold planet (*Conv.* ii. 14) of the contemplative, is in Leo, the symbol of fiery heat and strength. Extremes meet in the experience of the mystic.

<sup>27</sup> For the golden age under Saturn, see *Met.* i. 89-112; *H.* xiv. 96; *Virg. Ecl.* iv. 6; *Georg.* ii. 538.

<sup>29</sup> The traditional exegesis of Dante's time saw in the ladder of *Gen.* xxviii. 12 the symbol of the mystic's life, prayers ascending, angels descending. *Comp. John* i. 51. With these higher associations in view, and the long *catena* of tradition as to the meaning of Jacob's vision, I can hardly

And glories so o'erpowering met mine eye,  
 Descending on the steps, I deemed each ray  
 Was there diffused that shines in this our sky.  
 And as, accordant to their wonted way,  
 Rooks move, together clustered, to and fro, 35  
 To warm their night-chilled plumes at break of day;  
 Some, without turning, on their journey go,  
 And some move, circling, to their starting-place,  
 And some wheel round, yet only move in show;  
 So it appeared to me that I could trace 40  
 Live movements in the spark-cloud that came on,  
 Resting at certain points with slackened pace.  
 And nearest us its station keeping, one  
 Became so bright, I said within my thought,  
 "Well do I see the love to me thus shown; 45  
 But she who tells me how and when I ought  
 To speak or hold my peace, stands still, and I,  
 Against my will, do well to ask of nought."  
 She, therefore, who my silence did descry 50  
 In His clear vision to whom all lies bare,  
 Said to me, "With thy hot desire comply."  
 And I began: "No merit that I share  
 Gives me a claim that thou should'st answer me;  
 But for her sake who bids me speak my prayer,  
 O blessed life, whom 'tis not mine to see, 55  
 Wrapt in thy joy, to me, I pray, make known  
 The cause that to this nearness draweth thee;  
 And tell me why within this sphere alone  
 Is hushed that hymn of Paradise so clear,  
 Which through the rest rings out its dulcet tone." 60

follow *Butz.* in tracing the ladder to a vision of Romoaldo (note on C. xxii. 49), or in finding a "magnificent compliment" to the ladder of the Scaligeri.

<sup>35</sup> For other bird-similitudes see *H.* v. 40, 46, 82, *et al.*

<sup>45</sup> Dante had learnt, in the case of Cacciaguida, that increase of brightness meant increase of love, and thus implied the desire to hold converse. The soul that is thus indicated is that of St. Peter Damian.

<sup>46</sup> Beatrice, as the symbol of Divine Wisdom, guides him to a right judgment as to the time for silence and the time for speech.

<sup>58</sup> Here there are no hymns such as had been heard in the other spheres.



"Thou hast a mortal's eye, a mortal's ear,"  
It answered; "therefore here is song no more,  
As Beatrice's smiles are seen not here.  
Thus far have I descended, passing o'er  
The holy stairway's steps to make thee blest 65  
With voice and mantling rays that round me pour;  
Not that more love to quicker movement pressed,  
For full as much, and more, above doth glow,  
As my bright flame to thee makes manifest:  
But the high Charity, which bids us go 70  
To work the counsels which the world control,  
To each assigns his lot, as thou dost know."  
"Well do I see," said I, "O burning soul,  
How Love unfettered in this court on high  
Follows the Eternal Mind that planned the whole; 75  
But that which seems to me a mystery  
Is why thou wast predestinate alone,  
To this thy task, of all thy company."  
Ere from my lips that same last word had flown,  
The light, about its centre whirling round, 80  
Went spinning on, as spins a mill's swift stone;  
Then answer made the love that there was found:  
"A light divine on me is concentrate,  
Piercing through this wherein I now am wound,  
Whose virtue, with my sight associate, 85  
Lifts me so high above myself that I  
The Essence see whence it doth emanate.  
Hence comes the joy that me doth glorify,  
For as my vision grows more bright and clear,  
So shines the flame with brighter clarity: 90

They would have been too much for mortal ears, just as Beatrice's smile would have been too much for mortal eyes.

<sup>67</sup> The humility of the saints in glory is shown in the fact that the soul that speaks disclaims any higher measure of love than others share. He is but doing the appointed work assigned him. Dante, accepting that statement, still seeks to know why that work was assigned to him alone of all that company.

<sup>80</sup> The whirling of the soul is the expression of the rapturous joy with which it accepts its appointed task.

But that pure soul in heaven that knows no peer,  
 The Seraph who on God most near doth gaze,  
 To solve thy question never could come near:  
 Since deep within the abyss the problem stays  
 Which thou dost ask, the abyss of God's decree, 95  
 From glance of creature eye cut off always;  
 And when thou art returned, I say to thee,  
 Tell this to men, that they may not presume  
 To such a goal to move with footsteps free.  
 Earth shrouds the soul, which here is bright, in gloom: 100  
 Consider then how that may be below,  
 Wherein he fails who holds Heaven's highest room."  
 These words he uttered, then restrained me so,  
 That I withdrew my question, and was fain  
 Humbly to pray that I his name might know. 105  
 "'Twixt the two shores that Italy contain  
 Rise rocks not distant from thy native town,  
 So high that lower roars the thunder's strain;

91-96 The soul of the speaker has attained the beatific vision of the Supreme Essence, but even the most illumined Seraph would fail to unfold the mystery of the Divine will, which assigns to every man his work. Dante on his return to earth is to report this, that men may not "rush in where angels fear to tread." The whole tone indicates the same sense of the limitations of man's knowledge as we have seen in C. xiii. 139, xix. 99, xx. 130.

106 St. Peter Damian sketches the outlines of his life, which we may in some measure fill up from the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists and Milm. L. C. iii. 371-445. Born at Ravenna in humble life, he began life as a swineherd. His brother, Damiano, Archdeacon of Ravenna, had been educated, and he took Damian as a surname, as a token of his gratitude, just as the Bishop of Cæsarea called himself Eusebius Pamphili, the friend of Pamphilus. He became a teacher at Ravenna (where Dante was probably residing when he wrote this Canto), but at the age of thirty entered the monastery of Fonte Avellana, near Catria and Gubbio, in the Umbrian Apennines; became its Abbot; was honoured by successive Popes from Gregory VI. to Stephen X., the latter appointing him in 1058 as Cardinal Bishop of Ostia. In 1059 he was sent by Nicholas II. as legate to Milan, to assert the rights of the See of Peter over that of Ambrose. He wrote a treatise, appalling in its Juvenalian horrors, against the vices that prevailed among the monks and clergy, and was a strong supporter of Gregory VII. in enforcing the celibacy of the priesthood and restraining the prevailing simony. Later on he laid aside his dignity as Bishop and Cardinal, and retired to his monastery, leading an austere and contemplative life. If, according to a somewhat uncertain tradition, Dante himself passed some time at the Fonte Avellana monastery on leaving Verona in 1318, there were local associations there, as well as at Ravenna, explaining his

They make a rounded ridge, as Catria known,  
 'Neath which there stands a holy monastery, 110  
 To highest worship consecrate alone."  
 Thus the third time he turned his speech to me,  
 And then continuing said, "There I of old  
 So strong became in God's blest ministry,  
 That, or in summer's heat or winter's cold, 115  
 The juice of olives was my only fare,  
 Content with contemplations manifold.  
 Of old that cloister for these heavens did bear  
 A fertile harvest, now so barren found,  
 'Tis meet that soon its shame be all laid bare. 120  
 There did my name as Peter Damian sound—  
 Peter the Sinner was my bye-name, where  
 Our Lady's convent stands on Adrian shore.  
 But little mortal life was yet to spare,  
 When to that hat they called me, yea, they drew, 125  
 Which evermore from bad to worse doth wear.  
 Cephas and he, the Spirit's vessel true  
 And chosen, barefoot went and mortified,  
 And ate what food chance hostel to them threw.

reverence for the saint. The inference drawn from this passage by Franciosi (*Scritt. Dant.* pp. 12-17), that Dante admired the character and policy of Gregory VII., seems to me at variance with the whole tenor of the poet's teaching in the *Monarchiâ* and elsewhere.

122 The natural meaning of the words seems to be that in some monastery on "the Adrian shore," *sc.* at Ravenna, Peter had been known by his self-imposed epithet of the "Sinner," and that at Fonte Avellana, before or afterwards, he took the name of Damiano from his brother. A difficulty arose from the fact that there was another Peter (degli Onesti), a monk of Santa Maria in Porto fuori, founded in 1096, who also, following Damian's example, took the name of *Peccator*. Some writers have assumed that Dante confused the two; others have adopted the reading "*fu*" instead of "*fui*," as though the line was introduced to correct such a confusion in the minds of others. As a matter of fact, Damian called himself *Peccator* in letters written at Fonte Avallana. On the whole, it is probable that Dante's knowledge of local facts was greater than that of his critics, and that he knew that the two names were associated respectively with the two localities (*Scart.*). In the later years of his life, it may be added, Damian had been at Ravenna as Papal legate, bringing back its Archbishop to obedience to the See of Rome.

124 Damian was made Cardinal 1058, *d.* 1072. The rebukes of clerical vices that follow are exactly in harmony with what Damian had said and

Our modern shepherds need on either side 130  
 An arm to lead them and strong back to bear,  
 So weighty they !—and one their train to guide;  
 And with their palfreys they their mantles share,  
 And so two beasts go underneath one skin:  
 O Patience, that, this seeing, canst forbear ! ” 135  
 And at this word I saw more flames begin  
 To leap down step by step and whirl around,  
 And as they whirled more beauty did they win;  
 Then round that soul they came, and kept their  
 ground,  
 And raised a shout that rang so deep a knell, 140  
 That for it no similitude is found,  
 Nor could I, thunderstruck, its meaning tell.

## CANTO XXII

*St. Benedict's Lamentations over his Order—Dante in Gemini  
 —The backward Look from the Eighth Heaven of the fixed  
 Stars*

OPPRESSED with this amazement, to my Guide  
 I turned me, like a little child who goes  
 For refuge there where most he doth confide;

written in his lifetime (Milm. *L. C.* iii. 445). Line 126 carries our thoughts to the Cardinals of Avignon as baser than those at Rome had been.

131 The invective reads almost like a caricature, but it is mild as compared with Damian's own language, or even with that of St Bernard (*Serm. in Cant.* 33). One seems to see the burly prelate riding on his horse or mule with the four attendants, the stately robes not laid aside even for riding, but falling over the horse's back.

138 Severe as the words were, it was the severity of love that spoke in them, and therefore the loving souls of the mystics welcome them and rejoice in them ; but their utterance was not, as in other cases, a hymn of praise, but as the thunder of a threatened doom, all the more terrible because undefined.

2 For other similitudes from the life of children see *C.* 100 ; *II.* xxiii. 37 ; *Purg.* xxx. 43. We note the new, the almost filial relation in which the poet stands to Beatrice in her new transfigured character.

And she, like mother who, to give repose,  
 Turns quickly to her pale and breathless boy, 5  
 With voice that's wont to sooth him and compose,  
 Said, "Know'st thou not thou dost Heaven's bliss  
 enjoy,  
 And know'st thou not all Heaven is holiness,  
 And this is wrought by zeal without alloy?  
 How their song would have changed thee thou may'st 10  
 guess,  
 And how my smile, far better than before,  
 Since e'en that cry thy sense did so oppress,  
 In which, if thou had'st read its prayerful lore,  
 Thou should'st e'en now the avenger's sentence  
 know,  
 Which thou shalt see ere yet thy life be o'er. 15  
 The sword on high nor deals its stroke too slow  
 Nor yet too swift, save only in his thought  
 Who, or with wish or fear, expects the blow.  
 But turn thee now, for then, before thee brought,  
 Thou shalt see other spirits high in praise, 20  
 If, as I bid, the vision thou hast sought."  
 And as it pleased her, so I turned my gaze,  
 And saw a hundred spherules that combined  
 To gain fresh beauty with their mutual rays.  
 I stood as one who keeps within his mind 25  
 Desire's keen goad, nor doth to question  
 care,  
 Such dread of o'er-bold speech each thought doth  
 bind;

15 The words, considered as a prophecy *ex eventu*, may be referred either to the death of Boniface VIII. or the Babylonian captivity at Avignon; possibly to some unfulfilled hopes, cherished when the Canto was written, of a yet further vengeance which should correct the vices of the priesthood. Comp. *Purg.* xx. 94-96. That vengeance would come in due season, when the time was ripe, as Divine acts always do come, though men count them precipitate or slack. We are reminded of the words which are found on the monument of Henry VII., now in the Campo Santo of Pisa, "*Quicquid facimus venit ex alto*." I cannot help tracing Dante's mind in them.

And then the greatest, bright beyond compare,  
 Of all those shining pearls to us drew nigh,  
 Unto my will supreme content to bear. 30  
 Then from within it came, "If thou, as I,  
 Could'st see the love that here doth live and glow,  
 Thy thoughts would then to fullest utterance fly;  
 But that thou, waiting, be not all too slow  
 For the high goal, I too will make reply, 35  
 E'en to the thought o'er which thou watchest so.  
 That mountain on whose slope Cassino high  
 Standeth, was peopled in the days of yore  
 By men of evil life and drawn awry;  
 And I am he who there first tidings bore 40  
 Of His great Name who to our earth did bring  
 The truth that doth exalt us more and more,  
 And o'er me such great grace its light did fling,  
 I drew the neighbouring towns from impious rite,  
 Which led the world in error wandering. 45  
 These other fires were men whose eager sight,  
 Contemplative, was kindled with the glow  
 Which brings all holy flowers and fruits to light.  
 Here Romoald', here Macarius, thou may'st know;  
 Here too my brethren, who in cloistered shade 50  
 With steady feet and steadfast heart did go."

<sup>29</sup> Elsewhere the blessed souls are compared to rubies (C. xix. 4, xxx. 66), and topazes (C. xv. 85, xxx. 76). Pearls are perhaps chosen as symbolising the purity of the contemplative life.

<sup>31</sup> The speaker is St. Benedict, who has read, as in C. xv. 55, the poet's thoughts in the mirror of the Divine omniscience.

<sup>37</sup> The monastery of Monte Cassino, founded by Benedict in 529, after he had led for some years a hermit's life at Subiaco, stands on the site of a temple of Apollo and Diana. Benedict had thrown down their statues and converted the people of the district to the worship of Christ. Here also it is legitimate to trace the influence of personal associations. Alberic, whose vision of the unseen world may have served, with other like works, to have suggested the plan of the *Commedia*, was trained in that monastery, and was said to have had the vision at the age of nine. If we accept the tradition that Dante went before his exile as an ambassador to Naples, Monte Cassino would be a natural halting-place.

<sup>49</sup> Of the three conspicuous bearers of the name Macarius, Dante probably refers to the disciple of St. Antony known as "the Egyptian" or "the Great," who for sixty years lived as a hermit in the desert of Scetis (*d.* 391), and was honoured as one of the great master of the con-

And I to him: "The love which thou hast made  
 So clear in speaking, and the semblance kind  
 I see and note in all your fires displayed,  
 Have so enlarged the faith that fills my mind, 55  
 As the sun doth the rose when, wide outspread,  
 Its flowers the fulness of their beauty find:  
 Wherefore I pray thee, Father," so I said,  
 "Tell me if I such grace can e'er obtain  
 As to see thee with form uncoverèd." 60  
 Then he: "My brother, thou at last shalt gain  
 Thy highest wish in that supremest sphere  
 Where all desires, e'en mine, to rest are fain.  
 Perfect, mature, at last complete is there  
 Each yearning of the heart; in that alone 65  
 All parts are ever as at first they were.  
 For not in space it stands, and pole hath none,  
 And this our stairway riseth to its height,  
 And so beyond thy vision stretches on.  
 The loftiest summit met of old the sight 70  
 Of patriarch Jacob, soaring to the skies,  
 What time he saw the angels on it light.

templative life. Possibly he did not distinguish him from the other Macarius, also a disciple of St. Antony, who gathered round him a company of 5000 monks. Romoaldo, born in Ravenna in 956, founded in 1018 the monastery of Camaldoli in the Casentino, mentioned in *Purg.* v. 96. Here also it is allowable to trace the influence of local associations. It is noticeable also, as connected with the "ladder" of C. xxi. 9, that it is recorded of him in the annals of Camaldoli that he had seen a vision like that of Jacob (*Gen.* xxviii. 12), in which men clothed in white were seen ascending the ladder whose top reached to Heaven (*Butler*).

<sup>56</sup> The same image is found in *Conv.* iv. 27, with the notable difference that there it represents the youth and maturity of the student of philosophy, here the expansion of the soul under the influence of contact with holiness and love.

<sup>59</sup> Dante knows Benedict as a master of the spiritual life. Shall he ever know him more fully as a man, see his human face, know the thoughts of his heart? Who that reads of the lives of saints has not felt something of a like yearning?

<sup>62</sup> The "remotest sphere" is the Empyrean, the dwelling-place of God and His angels, the permanent home of the souls, who manifest themselves in the lower spheres according to their several characters (*Conv.* ii. 4; C. xxxi.-xxxiii.), that is beyond space, and is perfect in its perpetual rest (C. iv. 28-90).

<sup>70</sup> The vision of the ladder is definitely explained. See C. xxi. 9.

But to ascend it now no foot doth rise  
 From off the earth, and that great Rule of mine  
 But lives to waste the paper where it lies. 75  
 The walls which once were as an abbey's shrine  
 Are made as dens of robbers, and the hoods  
 Are sacks filled full with flour of thoughts malign.  
 But even usury not so far intrudes  
 Against God's pleasure as those fruits unjust 80  
 Which fill the monks' hearts with such wanton  
 moods.  
 For what the Church doth hold, she holds in trust  
 For those who in God's name ask charity,  
 Nor for a kinsman, or some baser lust.  
 So soft and frail our fleshly natures be, 85  
 That a good start holds not on earth its own  
 From the oak's birth till acorns fill the tree.  
 Silver and gold, we know, had Peter none,  
 And I began with fasting and with prayer,  
 And meekly Francis all his Convent won. 90  
 And if of each beginning thou art 'ware,  
 And then of each the downward pathway track,  
 Thou'lt see that white has passed to brown in  
 wear.

75 St. Peter Damian's lamentation over the vices of prelates has its counterpart in that of Benedict over the degeneracy of his Order. His Rule has become, in the most literal sense of the words, waste paper. Benvenuto relates that Boccaccio paid a visit to Monte Cassino in search of some precious MSS., and found the library door left open, the grass growing on the threshold and in the windows, and many of the books mutilated to make psalteries for the choir-boys.

76 An obvious echo of *Jer.* vii. 11; *Matt.* xxi. 13. The sacks full of mouldy flour are the heads of the monks, full only of evil and corrupt desires.

80 Usury, it will be remembered, had been classed (*H.* xi. 50) as a sin against nature. And even worse than that was the corrupt use of ecclesiastical revenues (*C.* xii. 98), or nepotism, or worse than nepotism. Line 84 clearly refers to the sin which Dante had coupled with usury (*H.* xi. 50). Dante carries on the work of Damian.

88 The three great instances of the corruption of the succession, (1) of St. Peter, (2) of Benedict, (3) of Francis of Assisi, form a melancholy basis for induction.



But Jordan, when of old 'twas driven back,  
 And the sea fled at bidding of God's will, 95  
 Were greater marvel than to meet this lack."  
 So speaking, turned he to his company,  
 Whereat that company together drew;  
 Then like a whirlwind soared once more on high.  
 With just one nod, my Lady, sweet and true, 100  
 Urged me behind them up that self-same stair,  
 So much her might my nature did subdue.  
 Nor e'er, when bodies rise or fall in air,  
 Was motion natural so exceeding fast  
 That with my wingèd flight it could compare. 105  
 So, Reader, to that triumph high at last  
 May I return, for which, with many a tear,  
 I smite my breast and mourn my sinful past!  
 Not for so short a moment could'st thou bear  
 Thy finger in the fire as that in which 110  
 I saw the sign next Taurus, and was there.  
 O glorious stars, O light supremely rich  
 In every virtue, which I recognise  
 As source of all my powers, whate'er their pitch,  
 With you he had his birth, with you did rise, 115  
 He, the great father of each mortal race,  
 When first I breathed the air of Tuscan skies;

<sup>94</sup> The mystical interpretation of the words of the *In exitu Israel* (*Purg.* ii. 46) is still in Dante's thought's. The restoration of a corrupt Church or Order to primitive vigour is as great a miracle as the marvels spoken of in *Ps.* cxiv.

<sup>100</sup> The ladder is, it will be remembered, that of heavenly contemplation. On that ladder Dante and Beatrice mount with inconceivable rapidity to the sphere of the fixed stars, the eighth of the Ptolemaic system.

<sup>111</sup> The sign that follows Taurus is Gemini, which the sun enters about May 18th or 20th. This fixes, probably, Dante's birthday as after that date. In the astrology of the Middle Ages the sign Gemini is in the house of Mercury, and is, therefore, the source, in the theory of stellar influences, of the gifts of genius and skill of speech (*H.* xv. 55; *Purg.* xxx. 109).

<sup>114</sup> The line is probably a conscious reproduction from Cicero's *Orat. pro Archia*: "*Si quid est in me ingenii, iudices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum.*"

<sup>116</sup> The sun, as the great source of life, was in the sign of Gemini when Dante first drew breath. That sign is the fitting point for his entrance within the starry sphere.

And now when unto me was granted grace  
     To enter that high sphere wherein ye roll,  
     'Twas given to me with you to take my place. 120  
 To you devoutly now I lift my soul,  
     With fervent sigh, that it fresh power may gain  
     For the hard task that draws it to its goal.  
 "Thou art so near to where thou shalt attain  
     Supreme salvation," Beatricè said, 125  
     " That with clear eyes thou should'st see all things  
         plain;  
 And therefore, ere thou farther in dost tread,  
     Look down once more, and see the world, how  
         wide  
     Beneath thy feet it lieth, far outspread;  
 So that thy heart, with joy beatified, 130  
     May join these hosts with triumph now elate,  
     That here in this ethereal sphere abide."  
 Then I retraced my way through small and great  
     Of those seven spheres, and then, this globe did  
         seem  
     Such that I smiled to see its low estate; 135  
 And that resolve as noblest I esteem  
     Which holds it cheap; whose heart is set else-  
         where  
     As truly just and good we well may deem.

123 The "*passo forte*" has been differently explained as meaning (1) the remainder of the poem, as dealing with the highest mysteries of heavenly things, (2) as the death which Dante, when he wrote the Canto, felt could not be far off. The invocation to the stars of Gemini, the givers of thought and speech, turns the scale in favour of (1). Comp. C. x. 26, 27.

124 The "crowning salvation" is the beatific vision of the Empyrean which lay beyond the sphere of the fixed stars (C. xxxiii. 27).

127 Dante, as in C. ix. 73, 81, coins one of the pronominal verbs, which English can but paraphrase.

133 By an act of scientific imagination the student of astronomy pictures to himself what the earth, as the centre of the universe, would look like as seen from the highest of the eight spheres. Dante's astronomical distances were probably not so vast as those of modern science, but even thus he learnt the littleness of earthly things. A *replica* of the same thought appears in C. xxvii. 79-87.

I saw the daughter of Latona there  
 All glowing bright, without that shadowy veil, 140  
 Which once I deemed was caused by dense and  
 rare;  
 I saw, with open glance that did not fail,  
 The glories, Hyperion, of thy son,  
 And Maia and Dione how they sail  
 Around and near him, and Jove's temperate zone 145  
 'Twixt sire and son, and then to me were clear  
 Their varying phases as they circle on;  
 And all the seven did then to me appear  
 In their true size and true velocity,  
 Each moving as distinct and separate sphere. 150  
 The little plot that stirs our enmity,  
 As with the eternal Twins I turned me round,  
 Lay all before me, from the hills to sea:  
 Then mine eyes looked where brightest eyes were  
 found.

139 See C. ii. 46-148 for the speculations referred to. We may note, in passing, Dante's knowledge that the moon, though revolving, or rather because it revolves, upon its axis, always shows the same hemisphere to us. From the stars he sees the other hemisphere which we never see, and there are no spots in it. Comp. the discussion in C. ii.

142 Hyperion, son of Uranus and Terra, appears in *Met.* iv. 192, 241, as the father of the Sun; Maia, one of the Pleiades, as the mother of Mercury in *Met.* i. 669, ii. 685; Dione as the mother of Venus (C. viii. 7). The two planets are thought of as moving between the Earth and the Sun. Jupiter moves, in his turn, between his son Mars and his father Saturn.

148 The marvellous vision has scarcely a parallel in poetry. Planetary distances and movements are seen from an immeasurable distance as objects of direct vision. The nearest approach to a parallel is found in Dante's favourite, Boethius (ii. 7), and Cic. *Somn. Scip.* c. 3, 4. Milton (*P. L.* vii. 339-386, viii. 66-178) attempts a like survey as from the standpoint of the Copernican system. Compared with that survey, the earth, on which men fight for fame, wealth, power, was but as a threshing-floor. Chaucer, *Troil. and Cress.* v. 1826, presents also some points of resemblance. Probably he had Dante in his thoughts.

153 The description indicates that the poet saw the whole of the land hemisphere of the earth, that he was therefore in the meridian of Jerusalem, the centre, in mediæval geography, of that hemisphere, and that as the sun was in Gemini, also in that meridian, it was noon.

*The Stars of the Triumph of Christ—The Rose and the Lilies  
—The Hymn “Regina Cœli”*

As bird, within the leafy home it loves,  
 Upon the nest its sweet young fledglings share,  
 Resting, while night hides all that lives and moves,  
 Who, to behold the objects of her care,  
 And find the food that may their hunger stay,— 5  
 Task in which all hard-labours grateful are,—  
 Prevents the dawn, and, on an open spray,  
 With keen desire awaits the sun's bright rays,  
 And wistful look till gleams the new-born day;  
 So did my Lady then, with fixèd gaze, 10  
 Stand upright, looking on that zone of Heaven  
 Wherein the sun its tardiest course displays;  
 And when I saw her thus to rapt thought given,  
 I was as one who, in his fond desire,  
 Rests in firm hope, although by strong wish driven. 15  
 'Twixt this and that 'when,' short time did expire—  
 I mean my waiting and the vision bright  
 Of Heaven, each moment flushed with clearer fire;  
 And Beatrice said, “Behold the might  
 Of Christ's triumphant hosts; the harvest know, 20  
 Reaped from the rolling of these spheres of light.”

<sup>1</sup> The image of the bird—perhaps the most beautiful of all in Dante's bird-gallery—may have been drawn from nature. Interesting parallels are, however, found in Dante's favourite poets, Virgil (*Æn.* xii. 473-476) and Statius (*Achill.* i. 212).

<sup>10</sup> The description is analogous to those of *Purg.* xxx. 58-75, but with this difference, that here, carrying on the thought of C. xxii. 133-154, the astronomical facts are seen not from the standpoint of earth, but from that of the sphere of the fixed stars. The problem was a difficult one, and Dante can scarcely be said to have solved it. What is meant is that Beatrice looks to that part of the heaven (but was the glance upward or downward?) which would be to the astronomer on earth in the meridian of Jerusalem as the centre of the land hemisphere. In that region, in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Joel* iii. 2), according to the universal belief of the Middle Ages, the Christ was to appear at His second coming. And here accordingly there is a vision of that glory, and all the saints who had been manifested, according to their merits in the lower spheres, are here gathered together.

Then seemed it as though all her face did glow,  
 And her clear eyes so shone with joyous sheen,  
 I must without a comment let them go.  
 As when in full-moon nights, in sky serene, 25  
 Smiles Trivia's face among those nymphs eterne,  
 Whose shining forms through all heaven's vaults are  
 seen,  
 So I, above ten thousand lamps that burn,  
 Saw one bright Sun that kindled every one,  
 As our sun doth the orbs we see superne; 30  
 And through the living light transparent shone  
 The lucid substance so divinely clear,  
 That my frail sight was dazzled and o'erdone.  
 O Beatrice, gentle guide and dear!  
 To me she said, "That which o'ertasks thy sense 35  
 Is Might from which no refuge doth appear.  
 There is the Wisdom, there the Omnipotence,  
 That opened wide the paths 'twixt Heaven and  
 earth,  
 For which so long has been desire intense."  
 As flash that from the storm-cloud takes its birth, 40  
 Dilating, finds not space wherein to stay,  
 And, 'gainst its nature, doth itself inearth,

<sup>26</sup> Trivia = Diana = the Moon, as in *Æn.* vi. 13, 35. The comparison will remind most readers of the well-known passage in Homer (*Il.* viii. 555); but I can scarcely agree with Butler that that passage must have been known to Dante in the original.

<sup>29</sup> The Sun is none other than the Christ—the true Light, Light of Light, the Dayspring from on high, the Sun of Righteousness. The "substance" through which the Light shines is the glorified human nature of the ascended Christ (*C.* xiv. 52).

<sup>30</sup> The fixed stars were supposed in mediæval astronomy to shine by the sun's reflected light. *Butl.* takes the words as = "the eyes we upward turn" (*Comp. C.* xxxii. 99; *Purg.* xviii. 3).

<sup>37</sup> As with the great masters of theology, the mystery of the Incarnation was for Dante the loftiest and profoundest of all truths. By it, as by the ladder of Jacob's vision (*C.* xxi. 9, xxii. 70), the way had been opened between earth and Heaven.

<sup>40</sup> The law of fire was, from the standpoint of Dante's physics (*Conv.* iii. 4), to ascend, yet the lightning falls to the earth. So the soul of the seer, expanding with its heavenly food, contrary to the law which unites it with the body, passes, as in ecstasy, into a higher region (*comp. 2 Cor.* xii. 2-4),

So, as before my mind those rich feasts lay,  
 Itself, grown large, beyond itself it bore,  
 And how it fared my memory fails to say. 45  
 "Open thine eyes and what I am explore,  
 Thou hast seen things that give thee strength to  
 bear  
 Light of my smiles thou could'st not bear before."  
 I was as one who feels as half aware  
 Of some forgotten dream, and strives in vain 50  
 To call it to his mind and keep it there,  
 When I this offer heard thus spoken plain,  
 Of such thanks worthy that no time should blot  
 It from the book where lives the past again.  
 Though now should chant in concert every throat 55  
 That Polyhymnia and her sisters made  
 So passing rich with sweetest milk of thought,  
 To help me, not a thousandth part were said,  
 Were they to sing that holy smile divine,  
 And light which o'er her holy face it shed. 60  
 So, when to tell of Paradise is mine,  
 Here needs must leap the consecrated song,  
 As one whose way some hindrance doth confine;  
 And whoso thinks how great the theme and long,  
 How frail the shoulder that the weight must bear, 65  
 Will hardly, though it tremble, count it wrong.

and it was impossible to recall or reproduce what he had then seen and felt (C. i. 121-141).

<sup>48</sup> In C. xxi. 4 Beatrice had told the seer that her smile—symbol of the rapture of Divine joy—would utterly consume him, but the vision of glory which he had just seen has strengthened him so that he can bear it now.

<sup>50</sup> One notes the self-portraiture of the man, who, from earliest youth onward, had seen visions and dreamt dreams (*V. N.* c. 3, 9, 12, *et al.*) Sometimes these could be recalled, sometimes, as in the case of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, the endeavour to recall was all but fruitless.

<sup>53</sup> We note the parallel with the opening words of the *V. N.*: "In that part of the book of my memory."

<sup>55</sup> *Æn.* vi. 625, *Met.* viii. 533, possibly *John* xxi. 25, and *Homer*, *Il.* ii. 637, may have been in Dante's thoughts.

<sup>57</sup> The image was a favourite one (*Purg.* xxii. 102), and was, in part, an echo of *1 Cor.* iii. 2, *Heb.* v. 12, *1 Pet.* ii. 2.

<sup>66</sup> It remains true, *ipso facto*, that the ineffable cannot be told. The task was too great for mortal man to venture on.

No sea-way for a little bark is there,  
 Where prow o'er-daring cleaves the surging sea,  
 Nor for a pilot who himself would spare.  
 "Why doth my face now so enamour thee,  
 That thou dost not to yonder garden turn,  
 Which 'neath the rays of Christ blooms fair to see ?  
 There is the Rose wherein the Word Eterne  
 Was clothed in flesh, and there the lilies grow  
 Through whose sweet scent the way of life we  
 learn."  
 Thus Beatrice; and I, prompt to go  
 Where she did guide, gave myself yet again  
 To strife wherein frail eyes their weakness know.  
 As oft mine eyes have looked on flowery plain,  
 Themselves o'ershadowed, whilst clear sunlight  
 beamed  
 Through rift in cloud-banks, brighter after rain,  
 So saw I then more shining ones that gleamed,  
 With burning rays illumined from above,  
 Yet saw no source from whence the brightness  
 streamed.

<sup>67</sup> The thought of C. ii. 1-9 is reproduced. The *v. ll.* give *palleggio*, which may = *pelago* = sea, and *paraggio* or *paregio* = harbour or roadstead. The sense is, of course, much the same. The latter word still forms part of the nautical vocabulary of the Adriatic, and was one with which Dante would be familiar among the sailors at Venice, Pisa, or Genoa. Other readings, each varying the vowel with modifications of meaning, need not be noticed.

<sup>68</sup> There is a touch of pathos in the poet's reference to his own unsparing labours. Comp. C. xxv. 3.

<sup>70</sup> The implied thought is that the contemplation of the highest human beauty, even of the highest human wisdom, is but a small matter as compared with that which has for its object the glory of Christ and His Church. The "garden" is, of course, Paradise; the Rose—the *Rosa mystica* of the Litany of the *Rom. Brev.*—is the Virgin; the fragrant lilies are the saints. The words are as a mystical exposition of the *Song of Solomon*, ii. 1, 16, after the manner of mediæval interpreters. That passage, we may note, forms in the *Rom. Brev.* a lesson for July 2nd, the Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

<sup>71</sup> The beatific vision, however, comes not yet. The personal glory of the Christ is reserved for a further stage, and the eyes of the seer gaze upon that glory as manifested in the saints of God, as he had on earth looked on the fair flowers in a sunlit meadow, while he himself was shaded from its rays. Line 80 finds a parallel in 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 4.

O Might that thus hast stamped them in Thy love, <sup>85</sup>  
 Thou didst ascend on high, thus giving space  
 To these mine eyes, that else too weak would prove!  
 The name of that fair Flower, whose bounteous grace  
 At morn and eve I ask, my soul impelled  
 To see that greater glory face to face. <sup>90</sup>  
 And when, portrayed in them, mine eyes beheld  
 The size, the beauty of the living star,  
 Which there excels as it on earth excelled,  
 A little flame athwart the heaven from far,  
 Formed like a band wherewith the brow is  
 crowned, <sup>95</sup>  
 Engirdled it in windings circular.  
 What melody soe'er doth sweetest sound  
 On earth, and draws the soul in rapt desire,  
 Would be like broken clouds that thunder round,  
 Compared with that sweet music from the lyre <sup>100</sup>  
 That o'er that sapphire bright was then entwined,  
 Which doth the heaven most lustrous ensapphire.  
 "Angelic Love am I, and thus I wind  
 For joy of Him whom once Thy pure womb bore,  
 Where He we yearn for did a hostel find; <sup>105</sup>  
 And I will wind me, Lady, evermore,  
 While thou thy Son shalt follow, and shalt make  
 The highest sphere more heavenly than before."

<sup>88</sup> The *Ave Maria* was, as was natural with a devout Catholic, united with the *Paternoster* in Dante's morning and evening prayers. The Virgin is the "greater fire" of l. 90. Butler suggests ingeniously that the name of S. Maria del Fiore, as the title under which the Duomo of Florence was dedicated, may have been in the poet's thoughts.

<sup>92</sup> Another echo from the *Rom. Brev. (Scart.)*, "*Ave maris Stella*" (*Hymn for the Feasts of the B. V. M.*). As she excelled all others in the graces of her life on earth, so she excels them in the glory of her life in Paradise.

<sup>94</sup> The "little flame" from the Empyrean Heaven is the Archangel Gabriel, who revolves around the Virgin. The sweetest melody of earth would be as harsh thunder-roar compared with the infinite sweetness of his song.

<sup>101</sup> Sapphire, as the symbol at once of purity and of the divine glory. See note on *Purg.* i. 13, and *Exod.* xxiv. 10. So in mediæval art the Virgin is commonly painted with a robe of sapphire-blue. The "broken cloud" imagery reminds us of l. 81.



Thus did the ever-circling music take  
 Its closing note, and every other light 110  
 With name of MARY did the echoes wake.  
 That robe which, as with regal glory dight,  
 Wraps all the spheres of world that lives and glows,  
 Filled with God's breath and all His ways of might, 115  
 So high above us in its concave rose,  
 That where I stood its order fair did hide  
 Its beauty from us, nor did half disclose:  
 Wherefore mine eyes no power to me supplied  
 To track the course of that encrownèd crest,  
 That rose and rested at her Son's dear side. 120  
 And, as a babe that to its mother's breast,  
 When it hath had its fill, doth stretch its hand,  
 And inward love by outward glow attest,  
 So each of those white gleams erect did stand, 125  
 And with its summit so inclined, that I  
 Their love for Mary well could understand.  
 So stayed they then and met my gazing eye,  
 And sang *Regina Cæli* with a tone  
 So sweet, its joy fades not from memory.  
 Ah me! what plenteous harvests now they own, 130  
 Those well-filled coffers, which of old were found  
 Good tilth-land, sown with good seed, every one!

<sup>109</sup> The words paint the glory seen in the Heaven of stars, in itself but a prelude to that of the Empyrean Heaven from which Gabriel has descended.

<sup>112</sup> The "regal mantle" is the sphere of the *Primum Mobile*, which encircles all the other spheres. I follow the readings "*avviva*" rather than "*saliva*," and "*alito*" rather than "*abito*," "*interna*" rather than "*eterna*." Dante's gaze failed to follow what we may call the new "assumption" of the Virgin to the presence of her Son in the Empyrean Heaven.

<sup>121</sup> Another of the child-pictures from Dante's gallery. Comp. *H.* xxiii. 38; *Purg.* xxx. 44, xxxi. 64.

<sup>128</sup> From the Antiphon at Compline in Easter-week, and so fitting in with the assumed date of Dante's vision—

*"Regina celi, lætare, alleluia,  
 Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,  
 Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia."*

<sup>132</sup> The word *bobolce* admits of being taken as—"tillers of the soil"—

True life, true treasures, now for them abound,  
 Won when, as exiles sad, they wept of old,  
 And left their gold on Babylonian ground.  
 Here he victorious doth his triumph hold,  
 'Neath God's exalted Son, of Mary born,  
 With the two great assemblies, new and old,  
 By whom the keys of that bright Heaven are borne.

135

*St. Peter examines Dante as to Faith—Trinity in Unity*

"O HAPPY band, elect to fullest joy,  
 At the blest Lamb's great supper duly placed,  
 Who feeds you still with bliss that cannot cloy!  
 If by God's grace this man before doth taste  
 Of that which falleth from your well-filled board,  
 Ere death the limit of his life hath traced,

sowers of the good seed, or=acres, *i.e.*, "the soil so tilled." The latter seems to give the best meaning. The souls that Dante saw were not exclusively "sowers" in the sense of "preachers," but saints in the "good ground" of whose hearts the good seed had taken root and brought forth the fruit of good works.

<sup>135</sup> The contrast between Paradise and Babylon, as the symbol of the world, was familiar to mediæval thought. Comp. the Hymn *Alleluia, dulce Carmen*, of the 13th century in Neale, J. M., *Mediæval Hymns*, p. 183—

"Alleluias without ending  
 Fit yon place of gladsome rest;  
 Exiles we, by Babel's waters,  
 Sit in bondage and distress'd.

The former was to be gained only by ceasing to care for the gold which was the treasure of the latter. Looking to C. xxii. 88, there is a special fitness, even if we do not adopt the reading in l. 135, "where he left the gold," in the reference to St. Peter in l. 139.

<sup>137</sup> The two assemblies are those of the saints of the Old and New Covenants.

<sup>1-3</sup> Comp. *Rev.* xix. 9, vii. 16, as the starting-point of these lines. Probably the echoes of the hymn—

"Ad regias agni dapes  
 Stolis amicti candidis,"

(*Brev. Rom. Sabb. in Alb. Vesp.*), may have been more immediately suggestive.

<sup>5</sup> The image is reproduced from *Conv.* i. 1, but there the feast is that of

To his immense desire your heed accord,  
 And somewhat him bedew; to you 'tis given  
 To drink of that fount whence his thought hath  
 poured."

Thus Beatricè, and those souls in Heaven 10  
 Became as spheres that move on fixèd pole,  
 Like comets bright that flashing on are driven;  
 And, as the wheels in ordered clock-work roll,  
 So that the first we look at seems at rest,  
 The last to fly, such skill hath framed the whole, 15  
 So were the carols of those spirits blest,  
 Whose movements, as I saw them, swift or slow,  
 The variance of their riches did attest.  
 From that wherein did fullest beauty show  
 I saw emerge a flame so full of bliss 20  
 That none it left there with a brighter glow;

Philosophy, not the marriage-supper of the Lamb. The difference is eminently characteristic of the periods of Dante's life to which the two works respectively belong. See Essay on *The Genesis and Growth of the Commedia* (vol. v.).

<sup>9</sup> Glorious as the vision was, it was, as in C. x. 23-25, but a foretaste of the good things to come, as the dew compared with the full draught from the fountain of the Water of Life.

<sup>12</sup> Noticeable as the only reference to comets in the *Commedia*. Probably it was suggested by the appearance of what Humboldt calls the "magnificent comet of 1843," with its "unexampled splendour." According to Sir John Herschel's calculation (*Outl. of Ast.* 208-372), that comet appeared in 1318, the very year in which Dante was working at the later Cantos of the *Paradiso* (Humboldt, *Cosm.* iv. pp. 541, 544). Another calculation of its period gives 530 years, and this would fix its appearance in 1313. For the appearance of numerous other comets between 1300 and 1321 (the date of Dante's death), see G. F. Chambers' *Descript. Astron.* pp. 397-404. Three comets appeared in 1315. Comp. also *Vill.* viii. 48, ix. 65; *En.* x. 272.

<sup>13</sup> Comp. C. x. 139-148. It is suggestive that there the comparison is drawn from the outside mechanism, here from the inner works. Had Dante, after first observing, been examining the clock of the Archdeacon Pacificus at Verona, made in the 10th century, or was it a reminiscence of that which was fixed at Westminster in 1288; or lastly, as I have suggested in note on C. x. 139, of Peter Lightfoot's clock at Glastonbury? The point that struck him was the ever increasing velocity of the wheels, from that which revolved once in twenty-four hours to that which completed its revolution in a minute.

<sup>19</sup> The band was that of the Apostles; the bright fire, St. Peter. The triple revolution round Beatrice (=as elsewhere, Divine Wisdom=in the highest sense of the word, Theology), symbolises at once the doctrine of the

And moving thrice around my Beatrice,  
 It wheeled with so divine a melody  
 That fancy fails to tell me what it is.  
 So my pen skips; to write is not for me; 25  
 For, not alone our speech, our highest thought  
 For such fine touch hath colours all too free.  
 "O holy Sister mine, whose prayers have wrought  
 Such wondrous issue, by thy strong desire  
 Thou sett'st me free from that sphere, beauty-  
 fraught." 30  
 Then, halting in its course, that blessed fire,  
 And speaking thus, as I but now have told,  
 Did to my Lady thus with voice respire.  
 And she: "O light eterne of hero old,  
 To whom our Lord assigned the sacred keys 35  
 He bore, of wondrous joys and manifold,  
 Take thou this man, and test him, if thou please,  
 In points or hard or light that Faith concern,  
 That Faith whereby thou walked'st on the seas.  
 If with true Faith, true Hope, true Love, he burn, 40  
 It is not hid from thee, since thou dost gaze  
 Where all things clearly mirrored we discern.  
 But since this Kingdom draws within its ways,  
 Through the true faith, of citizens not few,  
 'Tis meet thou give him scope to speak its praise." 45

Trinity and the three theological virtues in which Dante was to be catechised.

<sup>28</sup> The human Beatrice and the symbolised Wisdom seem alike included in St. Peter's "Sister!"

<sup>35</sup> The early commentators (*Land.*, *Ott.*, *Anon.*) connect this and the two following Cantos with the tradition that Dante had been accused of heresy, and that this was his *apologia*. The same story is told of the poem known as the *Creed of Dante*, and as the Dominicans are named as his judges, there would seem, if the story be true, to have been some risk of the Inquisition. The authenticity of the Creed, is, to say the least, doubtful, but I have thought it worth while to translate and print it, that the reader may compare it with what is found here. If Dante's at all, it must be thought of as an experimental prelude.

<sup>42</sup> We note the ever-recurring thought (C. xv. 62, xvii. 123, xix. 29, xxi. 17) that the saints in Paradise "see all things in God."

As bachelere his armour doth indue,  
 And speaks not till the Master puts case clear,  
 Not judging, but debating if 'tis true,  
 So with my proofs I armed my memory there,  
 E'en while she spake, that I might ready prove 50  
 For such profession, such a questioner.  
 "Speak, O good Christian, now thyself approve;  
 Say, what is Faith?" and then I raised my brow  
 Towards the light whence these words seemed to  
 move.  
 Then I to Beatricè turned, and now 55  
 Prompt signs she made to me that I should pour  
 The streams that from my inner fountain flow.  
 "May Grace, which grants profession of true lore,"  
 So spake I to the great Centurion,  
 "Now of clear thoughts well uttered give me  
 dower! 60  
 As his true pen doth write," I then went on,  
 "My father, thy dear brother's, who with thee  
 Rome to the good and holy pathway won,

<sup>46</sup> We have probably a distinctly personal reminiscence of university exercises in Paris, Oxford, or Bologna (*Lacroix*, pp. 16-26). Dante is, as it were, examined for his degree of Doctor of Divinity (*Sacrae Theologiae Professor*) in the College of the Apostles. The four terms are distinctly technical. The bachelor (possibly *bacularius*, trained in single-stick, the word being used figuratively of mental gymnastics) is one who has passed through his *trivium* and *quadrivium*, and submits himself to a Master of Arts or Doctor in Theology for a degree in a higher faculty. The examination, as in the old *Responsions* of Oxford, is entirely *viva voce*. The examiner confines himself to testing the candidate's knowledge, and does not himself "determine," *i.e.*, formally discuss and settle, the questions propounded.

<sup>52</sup> The questions are probably such as were common in the schools. There the poet may have answered them in the pride of intellect. Now he prepares for his examination by a prayer for light.

<sup>59</sup> The Italian for "captain" (*primipilo*) is from the terminology of the Roman army, and was applied to the chief centurion of the *triarii*, the soldiers of the third rank from the front.

<sup>61</sup> The words assume, as was natural, that St. Peter wrote the second Epistle that bears his name (see 2 *Pet.* iii. 15), and that St. Paul wrote the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

Faith is the proof of things we do not see,  
 The substance of things hoped for, and from hence<sup>65</sup>  
 I find what seems its formal quiddity.”  
 Then heard I: “Thou full rightly dost commence,  
 If thou know’st well why he assigns its place  
 First as a substance, then as evidence.”  
 And I went on and said, “The depths of grace,<sup>70</sup>  
 Which here some me themselves make manifest,  
 Below, men cannot look on face to face,  
 So that on Faith alone their truth they rest—  
 Faith on which soaring Hope doth supervene,  
 And hence the note of substance is imprest.<sup>75</sup>  
 And from this Faith it ever right hath been  
 To syllogise, though nothing meet our sense;  
 And here the note of evidence is seen.”  
 And then I heard: “If every inference<sup>80</sup>  
 Doctrinal were on earth thus understood,  
 The Sophist’s craft had found no permanence.”  
 So breathed that flame, with burning love endued,  
 Then added: “Of this coin the alloy and weight  
 Full well the test of thine assay have stood;  
 But if thou hast it in thy purse, pray state.”<sup>85</sup>  
 And I: “Oh yes, it shines so round and bright,  
 That of its mintage none can raise debate.”

<sup>64</sup> *Heb.* xi. 1 from the Vulg. *Comp. Lomb. Sent.* iii. 23; *Aquin. Summ.* i. 29, 2, from whom the term “*quiddity*,” that which states what a thing is, is borrowed. The word has met us in *C.* xx. 92.

<sup>70</sup> The answer is accepted as true in fact, but then comes the “why?” and “wherefore?” And first as to the use of the term “substance.” Heavenly things, the joys of Paradise, are hidden from the eyes of sense. For man they exist in his belief, yet, where faith is, not as imaginations only, but as realities. Faith therefore gives objectivity to that which without it would be only subjective, and so, “as hope rests upon it,” it is the *substantia* of the things hoped for. What it affirms become the postulates or major premisses of syllogisms about those things, and so it is “evidence” or argument. *Comp. Newman’s Grammar of Assent*, *C.* ix. x.

<sup>79</sup> The tribute of praise may have been an echo of what the student had heard from some examiner in theology. “If all were so well armed there would be little room for heresy.”

<sup>85</sup> The quaint form of the question has the note of a distinct personal reminiscence. It reminds us of the saying, “Be ye good money-changers,”

Then from the depths of that transcendent light  
 There came a voice, "This jewel rich and true,  
 From whence each virtue draweth all its might, 90  
 Whence came it to thee?" "The abundant dew  
 Of the most Holy Spirit," then said I,  
 "Poured out upon the Scriptures Old and New,  
 A syllogism is which doth supply  
 A force so keen, that all that's else inferred 95  
 Would seem, compared with it, as fallacy."  
 And then, "Those axioms new and old," I heard,  
 "From whence thou dost such fixed conclusions  
 draw,  
 Why dost thou hold them as God's living word?"  
 And I: "The proofs through which the truth I 100  
 saw  
 Are outcome of results where Nature's care  
 Ne'er heated iron nor plied the anvil's law."  
 Then answered he: "Say who doth witness bear  
 Such works were wrought? What doth the story  
 tell  
 Itself needs proof; none else the fact declare." 105  
 "Nay," said I, "if without a miracle  
 The world was turned to Christ, that were alone  
 A marvel which all else doth far excel.

attributed to our Lord by Origen (*In Joann.* xix. 1) and Clem. Alex. (*Strom.* i. p. 354). He has given the image and superscription of the coin. Has he the coin itself? Has he the faith which he has defined so accurately?

<sup>87</sup> We note the contrast between the point of certitude now attained in the "Grammar of Assent," and the doubts of C. xix. 70-90.

<sup>90</sup> Faith is made the source of all virtues, which are but the fruits of faith, but what is the source of faith itself?

<sup>92</sup> For a parallel acknowledgment of the supreme authority of Scripture as the rule of faith see C. ix. 134, *Purg.* xxix. 83 *n.*; and the proof of Scripture rests on its supernatural effects, not exclusively, as the word "subsequent" implies, in the historical miracles which it records, but also in the spiritual changes which it has wrought in individual men and in the world at large.

<sup>106</sup> The effects of Christianity on the assumption that it was not supernatural would, Dante argues, be a greater miracle than any of those which are attested by its records. To prove Scripture from miracles, and then miracles from Scripture, is accordingly something more than a *petitio principii*, or "arguing in a circle." Peter, with no earthly power to back him, had planted the vine, and it had spread its branches far and wide

For thou didst come, as poor and fasting known,  
 To sow the field with that good seed that bore 110  
 Of old a vine, and now a thorn is grown."  
 That high and holy Court, when this was o'er,  
 Their clear *Te Deum* through the spheres did sing,  
 Set to the music sung where saints adore.  
 And then that Baron, who, examining, 115  
 Had led me on from branch to branch, until  
 We to the farthest leaves our flight did wing,  
 Began once more : "The grace, that with thy will  
 As mistress works, thy lips oped hitherto,  
 As it were well that it should open still, 120  
 So that I praise what thence came out to view ;  
 But now 'tis meet thou tell thy faith to me,  
 And whence to thy belief it came as true."  
 "O holy father, spirit who dost see  
 What thou didst so believe that younger feet 125  
 Were at the sepulchre outstripped by thee,"  
 I then began, "thou tell'st me it is meet  
 I show the form to which assent I give,  
 And of the grounds thereof should also treat.  
 And I respond : In one God I believe, 130  
 Alone, eternal, who all Heaven doth move,  
 Unmoved Himself, with love and will that live.

and borne fruit. Unhappily the vine had degenerated into a bramble (*Isai.* v. 1-4).

<sup>113</sup> The hymn is the *Te Deum*, which had been already heard in *Purg.* ix. 140, sung now with a new and heavenly melody.

<sup>115</sup> So Boccaccio (*Dec.* vi. 10) gives the title of *Baron* to St. Antony. There is perhaps a touch of Ghibellinism, or, at least, of the idealist author of the *Monarchiâ* in giving this name to the peers of the court of the great Emperor (*H.* i. 124). Comp. C. xxv. 17.

<sup>118</sup> The praise given by Peter reminds us of the words once spoken to him (*Matt.* xvi. 17).

<sup>126</sup> Comp. *John* xx. 3. Dante assumes, with most interpreters, that St. Peter was older than St. John.

<sup>130</sup> The paraphrase that follows may be compared in its conciseness with the somewhat wordy exposition of the so-called *Creed of Dante*.

<sup>131</sup> The thought is partly a physical explanation of the universe. The immense velocity of the *Primum Mobile* which moves all the lower spheres is itself caused by the desire to unite itself with the Empyrean Heaven as the abode of God.



And this my faith I do not seek to prove  
 Only by physic, metaphysic, lore,  
 But Truth bestows it, dropping from above, 135  
 Through Moses, Psalms, and Prophets, and yet more,  
 Through the great Gospel, and through you who  
 wrote,  
 Made holy by the Spirit's fire of yore.  
 And to Three Persons I my faith devote,  
 One Essence in that Trinal Unity, 140  
 In whom both *Sunt* and *Est* combined we note.  
 With that profound estate of Deity  
 Whereof I speak, my mind hath been imprest  
 Full often by the Gospel mystery.  
 Here is my ground-belief, the spark at rest, 145  
 Which in me spreads into a living fire,  
 And, as a star in Heaven, is manifest."  
 As master hearing what he doth desire,  
 Joyous, his servant straightway doth embrace  
 For that good news, when he of speech doth tire, 150  
 So, blessing me and chanting words of grace,  
 That Apostolic light, when I did cease,  
 Thrice circled round me, he who bade me trace  
 What thus I spake, so much my words did please.

133 The proofs which are probably referred to are those in the *Summ.* i. 2, 3, and his *Comp. Theol.* As drawn from the postulate that all motion implies a prime mover, they are physical; as proving *a priori* that the existence of God is necessary and eternal, they are metaphysical. The modern, or Paley, argument from design is almost conspicuous by its absence. As in l. 93, the poet prefers to rest on the teaching of Scripture.

138 The commentators for the most part explain *almi* as = holy, but it was probably formed from Latin *almus*, as from *alo*, in the sense of "productive."

141 *Est* is altered into *este* under the necessities of rhyme. In the Christian mystery we may say of the three Persons that they *are*; of the one God, that He *is*.

145 It is noticeable that the confession of faith is not a paraphrase of the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, but of the first clauses of the *Quicumque Vult*. In that Dante sees the spark which, under a doctrine of development, expands into a flame bright as the stars of Heaven.

148 What follows is, as it were, the admission of the candidate who passes his examination, to his degree. For the threefold embrace which the rector of the college gave to the new doctor we have the light, in which St. Peter

*St. James examines Dante as to Hope*

SHOULD it e'er chance that this my sacred song,  
 To which both Heaven and earth have so set hand,  
 That it hath made me lean through years full long,  
 O'ercome the cruelty that keeps me banned  
 From the fair fold where I as lamb did rest, 5  
 Foe of the wolves who war against the land,  
 With other voice, in other fleece then drest,  
 I shall return as poet, laurel-crowned,  
 And at my baptism's font my brow invest;  
 For there into the Faith I entrance found 10  
 Which makes souls known of God, and since aright  
 I held it, Peter thus my head wheeled round.  
 Then towards us moved another shining light  
 Out of the band from whom the first-fruits came,  
 E'en those whom Christ left vicars of His might; 15  
 And then my Lady, as with joy aflame,  
 Said to me, "Lo, behold the Baron there,  
 Through whom Galicia hath its pilgrim-fame."

was manifested, circling round the poet in token of supreme satisfaction. Comp. C. xxiii. 96. For the imagery of master and servant see *H.* xvii. 90, and *Canz.* i. 17-19.

<sup>1</sup> The opening lines have the interest of revealing the poet's consciousness of the greatness of his work as he drew towards its completion. For years it had absorbed his energies and made him prematurely old and thin. Would it ever gain for him that return to the city that he loved for which he thirsted, and which still shut its gates against him except on conditions which were so humiliating that he rejected them with scorn? (Comp. *Ep.* 10). The hope that his poem would overcome the hatred of his fellow-citizens, that he might yet be received with the laureate crown, which had never as yet been given to any poet who wrote in Italian (*Faur.* i. 241), was, as his first *Ep.* to Joannes de Virgilio (l. 42) shows, strong within him. His own beloved and "beautiful St. John's" might yet receive him in that character. As it was, the hope was destined to be disappointed and the laurel wreath was only placed by Guido Novello on the forehead of his corpse (*Faur.* i. 244). It is noticeable, however, that he uses not the word *corona*, but *cappello*, the *biretta* or cap which in the University of Paris was the sign of the doctor's degree (as in the "capping" still retained in Scotch Universities), and thus the thought grows naturally out of the examination in the previous Canto.

<sup>13</sup> The new light is St. James the Greater, who afterwards examines the candidate as to Hope.

<sup>17</sup> For "Baron" see C. xxiv. 115 n. In mediæval legends St. James

As when a dove doth near its mate repair,  
 And with their cooing and their circling ways 20  
 Each gives to each the proof of love's sweet care ;  
 So saw I one who bore a name of praise,  
 As glorious prince thus greeted by his mate,  
 While to their food on high their hymns they raise.  
 But when their greetings fond did terminate, 25  
 Silently *coram me* they both stood still,  
 So bright, my power of gazing did abate.  
 Then Beatrice smiling spake her will:  
 "O glorious life, by whom the largess great  
 Hath been described that doth our Palace fill, 30  
 Let Hope's name echo in this high estate:  
 Thou know'st that thou didst Hope embody there  
 Where Jesus did the Three illuminate."  
 "Lift up thy head and be of better cheer;  
 For that which comes here from the world below 35  
 Must needs be ripened in our radiance clear."  
 This comfort from the second flame did flow;  
 So to the hills I lifted up mine eyes,  
 The hills whose great weight erst had bent them so.  
 "Since in His grace our Emperor bids thee rise, 40  
 That face to face thou find thee, ere thou die,  
 With all His Counts, in Hall that inmost lies,

preached in Spain before his martyrdom at Jerusalem, and his body was brought to Compostella and buried there. Of all pilgrimages, that to his shrine was the most popular (*V. N. c. 41*).

<sup>19</sup> We are reminded of the comparison in *H. v. 82*.

<sup>24</sup> The "food," as in *C. xxiv. 1*, is the bread of angels at the marriage-upper of the Lamb.

<sup>29</sup> The readings vary, *la larghezza* and *l'allegrezza*. I follow the former.

<sup>30</sup> "Basilica" (=palace) is used in both its Christian and its classical senses, as being at once the Church of the redeemed and the Court of the great Emperor (*l. 41*).

<sup>32</sup> The thought that the chosen witnesses of the Transfiguration (*Matt. xvii. 1*) were respectively the representatives of Faith, Hope, and Love is found in Aquinas, *Summ. iii. 45. 3*.

<sup>38</sup> The words are an echo of *Ps. cxxi. 1*, but the "hills" in this case are he three great Apostles.

<sup>42</sup> "Counts," like the "Baron" of *l. 17*, follow fitly from the idea of the Heavenly Emperor. *Comp. C. xii. 40, xxiv. 115; H. i. 124*.

So that, the truth of this Court seen on high,  
 To Hope, that kindles love on earth aright,  
 Thou, for thyself and others, strength supply; 45  
 Say what it is, and how in its sweet might  
 Thy soul may bud and blossom, and declare  
 Whence it came to thee." So that second Light;  
 And that kind Saint who gave me pitying care,  
 And for so high a flight my wings did guide, 50  
 Made answer for me ere I was aware:  
 "Of all her sons, not one more fortified  
 With Hope hath the Church Militant than he;  
 Witness that Sun in whose light we abide.  
 Wherefore from Egypt he hath grace to flee 55  
 Before his warfare is accomplished,  
 And here the blest Jerusalem to see.  
 The other questions thou hast utterèd,  
 Not for thy knowledge, but that he may tell  
 With what delight thou hast on this grace fed, 60  
 To him I leave; they are not hard to spell,  
 Nor minister to boasting; let him speak,  
 And may God's grace give strength to answer  
 well."  
 As scholar who his master's mind doth seek  
 To follow, prompt and quick, because expert, 65  
 That he may show how strong hath grown the  
 weak,

<sup>46</sup> It will be noted that the one question includes the three that had come from the lips of St. Peter in C. xxiv. 53-112.

<sup>52</sup> The description is suggestive as indicating Dante's estimate of himself. Hope, so he thought, never failed him, not even after the death of Beatrice, or the decree which banished him from Florence, or the failure of Henry's VII.'s enterprise. That was the reason why, even in his lifetime, he had been allowed to pass from Egypt to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The words of l. 55 are an echo at once of *Ps.* cxiv. 1 (comp. *Purg.* ii. 46) and *Heb.* xii. 22.

<sup>62</sup> The question whether the candidate had hope, as he had faith, would have involved an apparently boastful, even if true, answer. Not so with the others.

<sup>64</sup> Another reminiscence, as in C. xxiv. 46, of the feelings of the student under examination.

"Hope," said I, "is expectancy alert  
 Of future glory, and it comes when we  
 God's grace and foregone merit can assert.  
 From many stars that light has come to me, 70  
 But he was first to pour it in my heart  
 Who of high Sovereign sang high psalmody.  
 'Sperent in te,' so doth his anthem start,  
 'E'en those who know Thy name.' Who fails to  
 know  
 That has the faith in which I claim a part? 75  
 From him distilled the thoughts that from thee flow  
 In thine Epistle, so that I abound,  
 And shower thy rain on others now below."  
 And while I spake, within the heart profound  
 Of that clear flame there thrilled a flash of light, 80  
 Frequent and swift, like lightning, darting round;  
 Then breathed, "The love which in me burneth  
 bright  
 Towards the virtue that attended me,  
 E'en to the palm and issue of the fight,  
 Wills that I breathe, that so as thine there be 85  
 Delight in her; and much joy would be mine  
 To hear what Hope doth promise unto thee."

67 The definition tallies with Lomb. *Sentt.* iii. 26, Aquinas, *Summ.* ii. 2. 17, 1. It springs from the union of divine grace with the "merit" which accrues from the co-operation of the will with that grace.

72 David is the "chief singer," the Holy Spirit the chief captain.

74 The words quoted are from *Ps.* ix. 10, as in the *Vulg.* and *Rom. Brev.* for Sunday Matins. Hope is represented as the outcome of faith.

77 The son of Zebedee is identified by Dante with the writer of the *Epistle of St. James*. The same view has been held by some writers, notably by the Rev. F. T. Bassett (*Ep. of St. James*, 1876), but the general *consensus* of critics goes the other way, and assigns the Epistle to James, the brother of the Lord. At first sight that Epistle does not appear to deal specially with Hope, but Dante may have had in his thoughts *Jas.* i. 2, 5, 12, 25, iii. 18, iv. 8, 10, v. 8, 15, 16. Promises imply hope, though hope may not be named.

84 The limitation is in strict accordance with Aquin. (*Summ.* ii. 2, 18 n.). Strictly speaking, there is no hope for the blessed, for it has passed into fruition. Incidentally, however, they may hope (1) for the blessedness of others; (2) for the completion of their own blessedness at the Resurrection.

86 I see no reason, as some critics do, for departing from the usual punctuation and construction of the Italian.

And I: "The Scriptures New and Old define  
 Full clear, the goal; and this proof shows it well.  
 Of souls who of God's friendship bear the sign, 90  
 Isaiah saith that each new-clothed shall dwell  
 With twofold raiment in his own true land;  
 And that land is this life delectable.  
 And this thy brother hath more clearly scanned,  
 There where he treats of garments clean and 95  
 white,  
 Revealing it for us to understand."  
 And then, when scarce his words were ended quite,  
 "Sperent in te" I heard above us sound,  
 Echoed by all the dancing sons of light.  
 And then among them one so bright was found, 100  
 That were such crystal seen in Cancer's sign,  
 A winter month would as one day pass round.  
 And, as a maiden blithe stands up to join  
 The dance in honour of a new-made bride,  
 Not for vain show, but with that one design, 105  
 So saw I that bright splendour glorified  
 Move to the two, who circled as they went,  
 In fashion that their strong love satisfied.

<sup>91</sup> The reference is to *Isa.* lxi. 7, where, however, there is no mention of vestures, but simply "*duplicia possidebunt.*" Possibly the "*duplex pannus*" of *Hor. Epp.* i. 17, 25, may have suggested the interpretation, or, as in the case of English and old French "doublet," the word may have come into use, without a noun, for a special kind of garment. The "land" is Heaven; the double vesture is the bliss of the soul and of the resurrection-body. *Lub.* quotes from St. Bernard (*Serm.* iii. p. 190), "*Acceperunt jam singulas stolas, sed non vestientur duplicibus, donec vestiemur et nos.*" For other traces of St. Bernard's influence see C. xxxi. 102.

<sup>94</sup> *Comp. Rev.* vii. 9.

<sup>98</sup> The verse which had been quoted by Dante before is now taken up and chanted in the language of the Church by all the souls.

<sup>100</sup> The soul that now appears is that of St. John. In winter the sun is in Capricorn, and Cancer, which is opposite to it, is seen at night. But if Cancer had a star like St. John, such as Dante now beheld him, night would be turned to day, and the day would last a month.

<sup>103</sup> I note once more the recurrence of the pictures of the brightness of the early scenes of youth which come back upon the mind of the fast aging poet (*Purg.* xxviii. 1-63 *n.*). This reminds us of *V. N.* c. 14.

It joined their dance and song with full consent,  
 And my dear Lady gazed with look firm pressed, <sup>110</sup>  
 Like to a silent bride with form unbent.  
 "See, here is he that lay upon the breast  
 Of Him who is our mystic Pelican;  
 He from the Cross was named for office blest."  
 So spake my Lady; yet, when she began, <sup>115</sup>  
 And when her words were ended, still she stood,  
 With gaze that turned not. Even as a man  
 Who looks, with all his might, in wistful mood,  
 To see the sun eclipsed a little space,  
 And tasks his sight, till lost sight hath ensued, <sup>120</sup>  
 So was I with that last fire face to face;  
 And then I heard, "Why dazzlest thou thine eye  
 To see a thing which here doth find no place?  
 In earth my body rests, as earth shall lie  
 With all the rest, until our number reach <sup>125</sup>  
 The limit fixed from all eternity.

<sup>110</sup> The picture, beautiful as a painting of Fra Angelico's, in itself has, of course, its anagogic or mystic meaning. Beatrice, as Heavenly Wisdom, finds joy in contemplating the teaching of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John as to the three supernatural graces.

<sup>113</sup> The mystical interpretation of *Ps.* cii. 6 probably suggested the symbolism. The pelican was said to quicken its young to life or to revive them when fainting by blood from its own breast, and so the Psalmist's words were taken as prophetic of Christ's redeeming blood. The symbol occurs frequently in mediæval art and poetry. So in the Eucharistic hymn of Aquinas, "*Adoro Te devote*," we find the line *Pie Pelicane Domine Jesu* (*Bull.*) The "grand office" to which St. John was chosen was that indicated in the words "Behold thy Mother" (*John* xix. 27). Comp. Neale, J. M., *Med. Hymns*, p. 176.

<sup>116</sup> I follow *mosser* instead of *v. l. mosse*, and "*le parole*" for "*alle parole*."

<sup>119</sup> The image comes straight, like that of the comet in C. xxiv. 12, from the experience of the student of astronomy. The man attempts to gaze on a partial eclipse of the sun through a lens or spectacles (I take this to be implied in *s'argomenta*), and then finds himself dazzled as Dante was when he looked at St. John.

<sup>124</sup> After all, what he sees is not the glory of the body that shall be, but only that of the provisional tabernacle of the soul in its intermediate state. The body waits in its grave for the resurrection-day, and that will not come till God has "accomplished the number of His elect." The dogma employed in the words just used, which I have purposely quoted from the Burial Service of the Prayer-Book, was received as an axiom by Augustine (*De Corrupt. et Grat.* c. 13), and by Aquinas (i. 23. 7), and was connected with the belief that the elect were exactly to fill up the gap caused by the fall of

Two lights alone, endued with two robes each,  
 In this blest convent mounted up on high,  
 And this the world shall gather from thy speech.’  
 And at this voice that shining company 130  
 Paused, and with them the dulcet song and dance  
 Born of the breath of those illustrious three,  
 As oars, that leapt and made the waters glance,  
 With rest from toil, or danger drawing nigh,  
 At boatswain’s whistle stay their swift advance. 135  
 Ah ! how my mind then felt perplexity,  
 When I on Beatrice turned to gaze,  
 And could not see her, though I stood hard by,  
 Close at her side, and in that world of praise !

*St. John examines Dante as to Love—The Soul of Adam*

WHILE I was thus perplexed, mine eyesight gone,  
 Out from the flame that quenched it, burning bright,  
 There came a voice that my attention won,  
 And said, “While thou art winning back the sight  
 That now, through me, from thee hath vanishèd, 5  
 ’Tis meet that speech should set the balance right.

the rebel angels, the number of which, though not known to us (C. xxix. 134 &c.), is known to God.

<sup>128</sup> The “two lights” are taken by most commentators to refer to Christ and the Virgin, but I see nothing to prevent our taking them as Enoch and Elijah. The statement is an implied protest against the early legends that St. John was to pass to Paradise not through the gates of death (*John* xxi. 23). The “two robes” are the earthly and heavenly bodies (l. 91).

<sup>133</sup> The simile is an almost literal reproduction of Statius (*Theb.* iv. 805, vi. 799).

<sup>136</sup> In St. John, in his character as *Theologus* (“St. John the Divine,” in *A. V.*), Dante finds a splendour which outshines even that of Beatrice as representing Theology. That which was glorious loses its glory in the presence of the glory that excelleth (2 *Cor.* iii. 10).

<sup>1</sup> St. John enters on his examination of the candidate as to Charity, which Dante takes as equivalent to the highest form of Love.



Begin then now, and say to what are led  
 Thy thoughts, and hold it certain thou canst prove,  
 Thy vision, though bewildered, is not dead;  
 Since that thy Guide in this bright realm above, 10  
 Thy Lady dear, hath in her look the skill  
 That did the hand of Ananias move."  
 I said: "Or swift or slow, at her good will,  
 Come health to eyes that were an open door  
 Where she came in with fire that burns me still! 15  
 The good that on this Court doth blessings pour,  
 The Alpha and Omega is of all  
 That Love reads, low or loud, in His sweet lore."  
 That very voice that freed me from the thrall  
 And sudden terror of bedazzlement, 20  
 To speak yet further did my purpose call,  
 And said, "Full surely thou must be content  
 To sift with finer sieve, and thou must tell  
 Who to such target hath thy bow thus bent."  
 And I: "By philosophic proof taught well, 25  
 And by authority descending hence,  
 'Tis meet that such love in my heart should dwell;  
 For good, as good, so far as meets our sense,  
 Doth straight enkindle love, and all the more  
 As the good in it groweth more intense; 30

<sup>12</sup> Ananias had with his hand restored the power of sight to St. Paul after his conversion (*Acts ix. 17*). So it had been the work of Beatrice to give clearness of vision to her disciple's mind; but with her a look sufficed, and the hand was not needed.

<sup>13</sup> The words throw us back upon the early experiences of the *V. N.*, especially, perhaps, of c. 19. Then the fire had been kindled which had never ceased to burn.

<sup>16</sup> The good is the vision of God, the "Good Supreme of mind" (*H. iii. 18*). That is the Alpha and Omega of every Scripture that teaches what true Love is. Comp. *Ep. xi. 33*.

<sup>22</sup> The object of Love has been rightly stated, but a closer sifting of the question was needed. By what process is the soul of man, inclining naturally to earthly things, led to seek that Supreme Good? The answer is that Reason and Revelation alike give a basis for Love. The great masters of those who know, notably Plato and Aristotle, had both affirmed that man's nature seeks its own good; the former, that it was to be found only in absolute goodness. L. 26 is almost a quotation from *Mon. ii. 1*.

So to that Essence which prevaileth o'er  
 All others, so that each good not in It  
 Is but a ray which Its own light doth pour,  
 More than to any other, 'tis most fit,  
 The mind should yield its love, if it discern 35  
 The truth that this high argument doth hit.  
 Such truth he bids my reason clearly learn  
 Who shows to me that Love is primal Lord  
 Of all we know as substances eterne.  
 And the true Teacher's voice brought Moses word, 40  
 Of Himself speaking, 'I to thee alone  
 A vision of all goodness will accord':  
 Thou too dost bid me learn it, making known  
 The message high of Truth concealed before,  
 Which tells to earth what in this Heaven is shown." 45  
 Then heard I: "Led by light of human lore,  
 And by concordant high authority,  
 Give God thy sovran love for evermore;  
 But say again if other cords there be  
 That draw thee to Him, so that thou attest 50  
 The many teeth wherewith Love biteth thee."

<sup>31</sup> The words might be illustrated by parallels from a hundred writers. Dante was probably following in the steps of Augustine (*Conf.* i. 1, "*Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te*") and Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 6, 4). If there is one Supreme Good, from which all others flow, there, and there only, can man's yearnings rest. C. xvi. 90.

<sup>39</sup> What has just been said is illustrated by the many names which commentators have suggested for the teacher spoken of: Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Peter. It would be easy to lengthen the list by adding the two names of the previous note, or Buonaventura, or St. Bernard, or Hugh or Richard or Adam of St. Victor. The "substances eterne" are the angels and the souls of men. *Comp. Purg.* xi. 1-3.

<sup>42</sup> The words have a special force in their *Vulg.* form, "*Ego ostendam omne bonum meum tibi*." Dante's equivalent "*valore*" is a favourite word with him. C. x. 3; *Purg.* xi. 4, xv. 72.

<sup>44</sup> Here again the question, what words of St. John were in Dante's mind, admits of more than one tenable answer: (1) *John* i. 1-14, (2) *1 John* iv., or (3) *Rev.* xxi., xxii. I incline to (2).

<sup>46</sup> So far the answers have been satisfactory. It remains that they should pass into act, and that the "sovrán" love should be kept for the "sovrán" Good.

<sup>49</sup> The question involves two metaphors. Man is drawn to God by many cords (*Hos.* xi. 4). Love bites into the soul, now in one way, now in another.

Not hidden from me was the purpose blest  
 Of Christ's own Eagle; whither he did mean  
 To lead my speech to me was manifest;  
 So I resumed, "Those bites so sharp and keen, 55  
 That help to turn man's heart to God on high,  
 With this my love are all accordant seen.  
 The world's existence, my humanity,  
 The death that He endured that I might live,  
 And that which all the faithful hope as I, 60  
 With the clear knowledge which these reasonings give,  
 Have drawn me from the sea of love perverse  
 Safe to the shore where true love I conceive.  
 I on the leaves that clothe the universe,  
 The Eternal Gardener's garden, love bestow, 65  
 As each contains the good He doth disperse."  
 When I was silent, sweetest song did flow  
 Through all the Heaven, and my Lady too  
 With them cried "Holy, Holy, Holy!" So,

<sup>53</sup> The eagle was the symbol of St. John in the received interpretation of *Ezek. i. 10, Rev. iv. 7*. The hymn of Adam of St. Victor (Trench, *Sac. Latin Poetry*, p. 67) is the fullest statement of the symbolism. A verse from a writer of the same school (*ibid.* p. 72), which Dante may have known, already quoted in its original form in C. i. 48 *n.*, may be given here in an English version—

"As eagle winging loftiest flight,  
 Where never seer's or prophet's sight  
 Had pierced the ethereal vast,  
 Pure beyond human purity,  
 He scanned, with still undazzled eye,  
 The future and the past."

<sup>55</sup> The answer states that Dante, in a living personal experience, had felt the force of every impulse by which the soul is led to God. The wisdom and power of God as seen in creation, the beauty of His goodness, the love shown in His redeeming work, the daily gifts of Providence or grace, the yearning of his soul for peace, he had felt the power of all as converging to the purest form of Love.

<sup>62</sup> The words point back to *H. i. 24*. There is the "troubled sea" of perverted love on the one side, the calm bright ocean of true eternal Love on the other. And that love so fills the poet's heart that it embraces even the leaves of the trees that are in the Paradise of God (*Rev. xxii. 2*), each in proportion as it manifests the Love and Wisdom of the "eternal Gardener" (*Summ. ii. 2. 26, 6*).

<sup>68</sup> The hymn is that of *Isai. vi. 3, Rev. iv. 8*. It is perhaps more to the point to remember that the *Ter Sanctus* is also the noblest of the Church's liturgical hymns, and that Dante had perhaps heard it sung at the Easter

As sleep departs when some keen light we view, 70  
 Through visual power which goeth forth to meet  
 The ray that every membrane passeth through,  
 And the awakened sleeper doth retreat  
 From what he sees, aroused so suddenly,  
 Until his reason gives him succour meet; 75  
 So from mine eyes did every sunmote flee  
 Before the rays of Beatrice's light,  
 That o'er a thousand miles shone gloriously;  
 Whence clearer than before I found my sight,  
 And I began to ask, with wondering gaze, 80  
 Of a fourth flame that did with us unite.  
 And then my Lady: "Here, within these rays,  
 The first soul that the First Power ever made  
 Looks on its Maker with adoring praise." 85  
 And, as a bough, by passing breeze low laid,  
 Bendeth its top, then riseth up again,  
 By its own proper virtue upward swayed,  
 So was I, as I listened to her strain,  
 Astonied; then new courage soon I won,  
 Through strong desire that burnt to speak again, 90  
 And I began: "O fruit who wast alone  
 Created fully ripe, O ancient sire,  
 Who dost each bride as twice a daughter own,  
 With all my soul devoutly I desire  
 That thou would'st speak to me ; thou know'st 95  
 my will ;  
 I speak not, but to quickly hear aspire."

Mass of 1300 in the Basilica of St. Peter's at Rome, when the thought of the *Commedia*, and of its consummation in the *Paradiso*, first began to take shape.

<sup>70</sup> We note the profound symbolism. Now that the poet is found perfect in love, the contemplative power, the spiritual vision, is keener and clearer than before, and he sees Beatrice (= Divine Wisdom), whom a little while before (C. xxv. 138) he had failed to see. And with her he sees a fourth form, besides those of the three Apostles, and learns that it is that of Adam.

<sup>85</sup> The poet's classical memories are with him still, and the lines are almost a translation of Stat. *Theb.* vi. 854-857.

<sup>91</sup> We note the strange mingling of scholastic fancies which gathered round the thought of the first created man. Every woman was a daughter

As oft we see some poor brute moving still,  
 All covered up, and all the wrapping shows  
 The strong affection that its breast doth fill,  
 Thus did that soul primeval then disclose, 100  
 So that it shone through all its covering bright,  
 What joy to meet my wish within it rose ;  
 Then spake : " Though thou hast not yet brought to  
 light  
 Thy wish, to me 'tis more distinct and clear  
 Than aught most certain that thou see'st aright, 105  
 Because I see it in that Mirror fair,  
 Wherein are imaged all the things that be,  
 While nothing can of It full image bear.  
 Thou seek'st to know what time hath past for me,  
 Since God in this high garden set my feet, 110  
 Where now this dame by long climb leadeth thee ;

of Adam ; as marrying a son of Adam she became his daughter-in-law. Is there a half-touch of humour in speaking of him as the " fruit created ripe," all too soon eating of the forbidden fruit, also created ripe?

100 Commentators, sensitive as to the dignity of the poetry, have been scandalised at the homeliness of the comparison, but for that very reason it is all the more especially Dantesque. (Comp. C. viii. 54, xvii. 129, xxxii. 140.) One wonders what animal he had in his mind. Shall I shock the critics yet more if I suggest a cat? Had it been a dog, it would have been natural to say so, but even Dante may have shrunk from *un gatto*. There is, it may be noted, a floating anecdote about his having trained a cat to hold a candle (Crane, *Ital. Stories*, p. 309, from Pitre, *Fiavvole e Novelle*, No. 200), which makes my conjecture probable. To me the word "*broglia*" seems to suggest the undulatory movement of a cat's body as it purrs in supreme delight. Those who remember Bishop Thirlwall and his cat "Lion," not to speak of "Montaigne playing with his cat," will recognise the adaptation of that animal to the taste of the scholar and the thinker.

104 The exceptional *v. l.* which gives the poet's name *Dante* instead of *Da te* deserves a passing notice, but has no claim to our acceptance.

107 The general thought is that of C. xv. 62, that the saints in Paradise see all things in God. All things are seen imaged in that Mirror, but nothing created, though it may reflect a portion of the Divine glory, can be said to present its image with the perfect clearness of a mirror. By some writers the Italian "*pareglio*" is taken as = the parhelion, the "mock-sun," seen in the sky under certain conditions of refraction, but without sufficient reason.

109 The soul of Adam had divined the questioning thoughts which were in Dante's mind, and which he shared with most mediæval interpreters of *Gen.* i.-iii., and answers them one by one.

110 The garden is the earthly Paradise where Beatrice met Dante (*Purg.* xxviii. 92).

How long mine eyes enjoyed this blissful seat,  
 And what the true cause of the wrath divine,  
 And in what speech my thoughts found utterance  
 meet.

Know then, my son, 'twas not mere act of mine, 115  
 Tasting the tree, that such an exile wrought,  
 But the transgressing God's appointed line.

There, whence to thee thy Lady Virgil brought,  
 For years four thousand, hundreds three, and two,  
 This great assembly yearned I for in thought, 120

And I beheld the sun its course pursue,  
 Through all its signs nine hundred years and more,  
 Thrice ten, whilst earth was yet within my view.

The language that I spake was past and o'er,  
 Ere in that work they never could complete 125  
 The race of Nimrod toil and trouble bore ;

For works of human reason still are fleet,  
 Through varying will of man, that seeks the new,  
 As the stars sway his course, their end to meet.

That man should speak, to natural law is due, 130  
 But whether thus or thus, doth Nature leave  
 To you to choose, as best it pleaseth you.

<sup>115</sup> The answer is almost literally from Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2, 73, 1). The first human sin was not the mere act of eating the forbidden fruit, but the desire of spiritual good *ultra mensuram*, and this implies pride and rebellion against God.

<sup>119</sup> The numbers imply 930 years of life (*Gen.* v. 5), 4302 in the *Limbus Patrum* from which the soul of Adam was released by the Descent into Hades. The chronology adopted is that of Eusebius based on the LXX., not the Ussherian reckoning based on the Hebrew, with which the margin of our Authorised Version has made us familiar. This estimate gives B.C. 5200, and not 4004, as the date of Adam's creation.

<sup>124</sup> In the *V. E.* i. 6 Adam is said to have spoken Hebrew as it was afterwards spoken by the children of Heber (*Gen.* x. 25, xi. 16). Here Dante retracts that view. We are left to guess why. I incline to think that he may have followed the tradition of some of his Jewish friends, but the question is scarcely worth discussing.

<sup>127</sup> The non-completion of the Tower of Babel is represented not as an exceptional catastrophe, but as a logical instance that nothing that originates only in human will and stellar influences has in it the elements of permanence (*Comp. H.* xxxi. 77).

<sup>130</sup> Dante's theory of language as the outcome of man's natural powers guided by his will has been adopted by Max Müller, who takes these lines (130-132) as the motto of his *Science of Languages* (2nd Edition).

Ere me the infernal anguish did receive,  
 'I' was the earthly name of that Chief Good  
 Who now the joy that swathes me round doth  
 give :

135

'Eli,' He next was called ; for as a wood,  
 Where one leaf cometh and another goes,  
 So needs must be all works of human mood.

I, in that Mount that o'er the waters rose,  
 Dwelt with a life, first pure, then marked with  
 shame,

140

From the first hour to that which followed close  
 Upon the sixth, when change of quadrant came."

## CANTO XXVII

*St. Peter on his corrupt Successors—The Ascent to the Primum  
 Mobile—The Evil of the Times*

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," began  
 That *Gloria*, chanted by all Paradise,  
 And I was drunk with joy, so sweet it ran.

<sup>134</sup> The J or I (that reading is preferable to *El* or *Un*) stands probably for the Jah or Jehovah of *Exod.* vi. 5. The "El," "Eli," have probably originated in a desire to make the passage agree with *V. E.* i. 4 ; but then, as we have seen, the whole passage has the character of a retraction of what he had there taught. "Un," though found in not a few MSS. and early editions, has little to recommend it. The Hebrew *Yod* had probably been shown to Dante by some Jewish friend, such as Immanuel of Rome, as the symbol of the sacred *Tetragrammaton*. The texts that give *El* in l. 134 give *Eli* in l. 136.

<sup>137</sup> An obvious reproduction of *Hor. A. P.* 60-62.

<sup>140</sup> The question had received various answers ; among them eight and forty days and thirty-four years. The prevailing tradition gave a few hours. Dante fixes the Paradise life as lasting from 6 A.M. to a little after noon. One wonders in all cases what were the *data* for the calculation ; but the mediæval mind did not much trouble itself about the limits of the knowable. In the apparent motion of the sun it passes over a quadrant in six hours. On the ecclesiastical division of the hours see *Conv.* iv. 23.

<sup>1</sup> The doxology comes fitly at the close of the examination in Faith, Hope, and Love. We must believe that the words describe what Dante had often felt as he listened to the actual *Gloria* in the cathedrals of Verona or Ravenna.

<sup>3</sup> An echo of the *Vulg.* of *Ps.* xxxv. 9, "*Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus*

It was as though a smile did meet mine eyes  
 From all creation, so that joy's excess 5  
 Through sight and hearing did my mind surprise.  
 O bliss, O joy, no mortal may express!  
 O life filled full with love and peace, good store!  
 O riches, free from selfish eagerness!  
 Before mine eyes stood still the torches four, 10  
 All burning clear, and that which first came near  
 Began to grow yet brighter than before,  
 And such in look and fashion did appear  
 As Jupiter and Mars would be, if they  
 Were birds, and should each other's plumage  
 wear. 15  
 That Providence which here on all doth lay  
 Appointed time and office, on their choir  
 Had laid commands awhile all song to stay;  
 And then I heard a voice, "No more admire  
 That thus so changed in hue thine eyes I meet, 20  
 For, as I speak, all these shall change attire.  
 He who on earth usurpeth now my seat,  
 My seat, my seat, I say, which to the eye  
 Of God's dear Son is vacant at His feet,

*Tuæ; et torrente voluptatis Tuæ potabis eos.*" The "smile of all creation," though, as a phrase, especially Dantean, may, if I mistake not, be also traced to liturgical impressions, such, *e.g.*, as would be made by the closing words of the magnificent sequence for the Sunday after Easter (I quote from the *Sarum Missal*)—

*"Astra, solum, mare, jocundentur,  
 Et cuncti grantulentur,  
 In cælis spiritales chori,  
 Trinitati."*

<sup>10</sup> The four torches are, it will be remembered, the souls of SS. Peter, James, John, and Adam. Peter begins, and bursts into the fierce invective, called forth, we must believe, by the latest report which had reached Ravenna from Avignon, where John XXII. was bringing the Church, year by year, to lower and lower depths of degradation, though, from the assumed date of the poem, the words refer strictly to Boniface VIII.

<sup>13</sup> Mars was the redder of the two planets, Jupiter the brighter. Assume them to change their plumage and Jupiter becomes fiery red. So St. Peter became as Dante looked on him.

<sup>22</sup> The threefold iteration is after the manner of the poet's favourite prophet (*Jer.* vii. 4, xxii. 29).

<sup>23</sup> Probably the words imply a denial of the validity of Celestine V.'s



He of my burial-place hath made a styè 25  
 Of blood and filth, wherein the Evil One,  
 Who fell from Heaven, himself doth satisfy!"  
 And lo! the hue wherewith the opposing sun  
 Paints all the clouds at morning or at eve,  
 The heavens through all their wide extent had 30  
 won ;  
 And as a maiden pure and chaste doth grieve,  
 Sure of herself, to hear another's sin,  
 And e'en to hear it thrill of fear doth leave,  
 'Thus Beatrice's face to change was seen : 35  
 So deem I in the passion of our King  
 Such dark eclipse veiled all the heaven serene.  
 Then further words he went on uttering,  
 With voice so altered as its accents rolled,  
 The change of look was not a stranger thing.  
 "Christ's Spouse was not with blood upreared of old, 40  
 My own, and that of Linus, Cletus too,  
 To serve but as a tool for gain of gold;  
 But to gain life, the joyful and the true,  
 Sixtus, Callistus, Pius, Urban, all  
 Shed their own blood, and bitter weeping knew. 45

resignation (*H.* iii. 60), and therefore of that of the election of his successor. The throne which Boniface filled was, of right, vacant.

25 The words doubtless paint Rome as Dante had seen it in 1300, but they were true also of Avignon in 1320, perhaps more intensely true.

28 The fiery flush of righteous wrath over the whole Heaven is obviously contrasted with the "smile of the universe" in l. 4.

31 Obviously here also there is one of the poet's memories. So he had seen the living Beatrice look as she, in her purity, heard of evil in others (*V. N.* c. 10; *Canz.* ii. 31-37). So the transfigured Beatrice, who has become one with the heavenly wisdom, must look on the evils of the Church.

40 The invective continues in words more applicable to John XXII. than to Boniface. One after another the names of the early bishops of Rome who had shed their blood, including St. Peter himself, are recited by way of contrast to the infamy of the Gascon and the Caorsine pontiffs, Clement V. and John XXII. The individual history of each Pope necessarily lies outside the range of a commentary, and may, of course, be found in any Church history. *Comp. H.* xi. 56 n.

'Twas not our purpose that our heirs should call  
 Half Christ's flock to their right hand, while the left  
 Should to the other half as portion fall;  
 Nor that the keys which with me once were left  
 Should be the symbol of the flag of fight 50  
 Against a host of baptism not bereft;  
 Nor that I should, engraved on seal, give right  
 To venal and corrupt monopolies,  
 Which make me blush and kindle at the sight.  
 Fierce wolves in shepherds' garb, with greedy eyes, 55  
 Are seen from hence through all the meadows fair.  
 Vengeance of God, why dost thou not arise?  
 Gascons and Caorsines themselves prepare  
 To drink our life-blood. O beginning good,  
 To what vile issue hast thou fallen there! 60  
 But Foresight high, that Scipio endued  
 With strength to guard Rome's glorious majesty,  
 Will soon bring help: thus have I understood.

46 One crying evil was that the Popes had shown themselves not the high-priests of Christendom, but the princes of a party. The Guelphs were at their right hand, the Ghibellines on their left (*Matt.* xxv. 33). Comp. *H.* xxvii. 85.

49-54 The keys first appeared on the Papal banner in 1229 (*Murat. Ann.* 1229). For the figure of St. Peter in the seal of the Fisherman, see *C.* xviii. 136, *Purg.* xxii. 63. Line 51 probably refers specially to the wars of Boniface with the Colonnas, but was only too true of the whole history of the Papacy.

53 The sale of patronage, papal and episcopal as well as lay, culminated under John XXII. Here again the contemporary records of an English diocese (Bath and Wells) illustrate the widespread corruption (Bishop Drokensford's *Register*, vol. i. p. xlv., lxxxvi., cxvi.).

57 The readings vary between *difesa* and *vendetta*, the latter being probably an explanatory gloss. "Defence of God" is hardly, I think, an adequate rendering.

58 The words, ideally spoken in 1300, are as a prophecy *ex eventu*. The veil is dropped. There was a lower depth even than that of Boniface, and it was found in the Pope who lived when Dante wrote the Canto, and in his immediate predecessor.

61 Had Dante, we ask, any concrete Scipio in his mind, or is it only the eternal hope which had before found utterance in the Veltro prophecy of *H.* i. 101 and in that of the DVX. of *Purg.* xxxiii. 43? Can Grande, we remember, was still living, and the poet-prophet had not given up the hope that he would prove the ideal reformer.

And thou, my son, whose path doth downward lie,  
 Still burdened with the flesh, ope thou thy lips, 65  
 And what I hide not, hide not thou." Then I,  
 E'en as the frozen vapour downward slips  
 In whirling flakes, what time the Goat in heaven,  
 To touch the sun, his horns in winter dips,  
 Beheld through all the expanse of ether driven, 70  
 But upwards, flakes of vapour full of joy,  
 That had to us awhile their presence given.  
 To track their semblance did mine eyes employ,  
 And they looked on, till space 'tween them and me  
 The power of passing farther did destroy. 75  
 And then my Lady, seeing me set free  
 From gazing on the heavens, said, "Downward turn  
 Thy glance, and where thy course hath wheeled  
 thee, see."  
 Then, since I first had downward looked, I learn  
 That I had passed through all the quadrant wide 80  
 Within whose bounds the first clime we discern;  
 So that I saw, on Gades' farther side,  
 Ulysses' wild track, and on this the shore  
 Whence once Europa, burden dear, did ride.

64 The mission from the chief of the Apostles completes that which had been symbolised by the "crown and mitre" of *Purg.* xxvii. 142. We are reminded of *Rev.* i. 19.

69 The line describes the winter solstice when the sun is in Capricorn. As at such a time the air might be seen thick with snowflakes, so now was the ether of heaven thick as with a snow-shower in which the flakes were souls in glory; but the shower rose instead of falling, and vanished in the Empyrean. While he gazes, he passes, in his ecstasy, unawares into the ninth sphere, the *Primum Mobile*.

79 When he had last looked down, it had been from the stars of Gemini (*C.* xxii. 133-154).

81 Like most of the descriptions clothed in the language of an obsolete stage of science, the line is to us difficult and obscure. The best illustration is found in *Comp.* iii. 5, where the *mezzo* or mid-circle is defined as the equator; the *first clime* is that between the tropics. What Dante seems to say is that he had passed through an arc corresponding to one traced on a globe from the equator to one of the tropics. The passage referred to is remarkable, as noticed in *H.* ii. 97 n., as giving the names Maria and Lucia to the two imaginary cities which illustrate his account of the sphericity of the earth. What he says here is that he actually saw from Phœnicia to Cadiz; that he might have seen farther east, but that the sun was westering, and leaving that portion of the earth in darkness. Butler

And further had to me this little floor 85  
 Of ours been open laid, but that the sun  
 Had gone beneath my feet a Sign or more.  
 My mind enamoured, ever dallying on  
 With that my Lady, more than ever sought  
 To bring back every look to her alone. 90  
 And if or art or nature e'er have wrought  
 Food for the eyes wherewith to take the mind,  
 In human flesh, or skill hath likeness caught,  
 All joined together I as naught should find,  
 Compared with that divine delight which glowed, 95  
 As to her smiling face I then inclined.  
 And the new power that this her look bestowed  
 Tore me away from Leda's pleasant nest,  
 And bore me to the swiftest heaven's abode.  
 Its parts, most full of life and loftiest, 100  
 Are all so uniform, I fail to tell  
 Where Beatricè chose that I should rest;  
 But she, to whom my wish was visible,  
 Began, with smile that of such gladness told  
 That God's own joy seemed in her face to dwell: 105  
 "The nature of that motion which doth hold  
 The centre still, while all the rest moves round,  
 Hence, as from starting-point, hath ever rolled;  
 And in this Heaven no other Where is found  
 But the one Mind of God, wherein doth glow 110  
 The Love that turns, the Power that doth abound.

conjectures "*Che va del mezzo al fin del primo clima*" as giving a clearer meaning.

91 Preparatory to the new ascent there is a revelation of the beauty of Beatrice as surpassing all that could be seen in human flesh or revealed by painter's art. God himself rejoices in her smile. A glance at that beauty carries the seer from the nest of Leda, *i.e.*, the constellation of Gemini, and he is conscious that he has reached the *Primum Mobile* (*Conv.* ii. 4), revolving with inconceivable rapidity. Conceptions of space derived from earth, sun, stars, are there inapplicable. He cannot tell where he is. There is no other *where* than the mind of God (l. 109), which impels its motions and endows it with manifold powers, both of which it transmits to all the spheres which it encloses.

106 There is little to commend the reading "*moto*" instead of "*mondo*."

Around it Love and Light encircling flow,  
 As it around the rest, and this bright sphere  
 He only knows Who it encircleth so.  
 Its motion hath no measure for its year 115  
 In others, but from this the others start,  
 As ten by half and fifth is measured clear.  
 And how in such a vessel Time apart  
 Hath set its roots, its foliage in the rest,  
 Will now be clearer to thy searching heart. 120  
 O greed of gain, which mortals hast opprest  
 Beneath thy weight, that no one hath the power  
 To raise his eyes above thy billows' crest!  
 The will in men may put forth fairest flower,  
 But ever-dropping rain at last doth turn 125  
 The true plums into wildlings hard and sour.  
 In tender children only we discern  
 Or innocence or faith; then each doth flee,  
 Ere yet the down to clothe the cheeks doth learn.  
 One keeps his fasts in prattling infancy, 130  
 Then, with tongue loosed, will food devour apace,  
 In any month, of any quality.

What is stated is that the earth, as the centre of the universe, is at rest, while all the other spheres revolve around it.

112 The "circle" is that of the Empyrean, thought of as the dwelling-place of God. Its light and love move the *Primum Mobile*, God only knowing how. It is the source and standard of motion to all other spheres, but cannot be measured by their standards. The comparison in l. 117 seems indeed to suggest such a standard. Was the poet astronomer baffled by the endeavour to express the ineffable, so that he fell unawares into the paradox of a self-contradiction?

118 Time was the measure of motion, and the roots of time are found, not as convenience has led men to find them, in the movements of the sun and moon, but in that of the *Primum Mobile*. Time ends there, as space also ends.

121 It is almost a relief from these transcendental speculations to pass to an ethical, even a homiletic, thought.

124 The words are as an echo of *Rom.* vii. 18, *Isai.* v. 1-4. The continual rain is the ever renewed prompting of the lower, selfish nature. In children (Dante's dogmatic theory would, I conceive, warrant his saying what he does even of unbaptized children) there may be some trace of faith and innocence, but they vanish as childhood vanishes. *Comp. Mon.* i. 11-13.

130 The examples of corruption are found in the two regions of duties which we have learnt to call positive and moral. The boy fasts on

Another, while he prattles, has the grace  
 To hear and love his mother; speech being clear,  
 He fain would see her in her burial-place. 135  
 So black becomes the skin, that did appear  
 At first so white to see, in that fair child  
 Of him who quits the eve and morn doth bear.  
 Thou, that thou wander not in wonder wild,  
 Reflect that earth has none to guide as king, 140  
 And so the race of man strays, all beguiled.  
 But ere that January pass to spring,  
 Through that small hundredth men neglect below  
 These higher spheres shall with loud bellowings  
 ring;  
 The tempest fierce, that seemed to move so slow, 145  
 Shall whirl the poops where now the prows we  
 see,  
 So that the fleet shall on its right course go,  
 And, following on the flower, the true fruit be."

Wednesdays and Fridays; the man eats flesh all through Lent. The boy keeps the fifth commandment; the man wishes his mother in the grave.

<sup>136</sup> The "white skin" is commonly expounded of human nature, thought of, as in C. xxii. 116, as the daughter of the sun. So in *Mon.* i. 11 man is described as "*filius cæli*" (*Par.* xxii. 116). The interpretation which sees in the whole passage a comparison of man's nature to the moon as the sun's daughter is not, I think, tenable.

<sup>140</sup> The complaint reminds us of the *Monarchiâ* (*passim*), of *Conv.* iv. 9; *Purg.* vi. 92. There was no one to govern the Church, for John XXII. (or Boniface VIII. if we take the ideal date) was not a true Pope; no one to govern the Empire, for Albert never entered Italy (*Purg.* vi. 97), and Lewis of Bavaria, Henry VII.'s successor, was following his example.

<sup>142</sup> The astronomer, in a passage strikingly parallel with Roger Bacon (*Op. Tert.* c. 54), notes the defects of the Julian Calendar. The annual error of a hundredth part of a day had thrown the Calendar out of gear by ten days. Gregory XII. reformed it in 1582, and the change was adopted in England in 1772. Here the prophecy looks to a more remote future than was Dante's wont, the limit which he sets extending, if we take his words literally, to well-nigh three thousand years.

<sup>145</sup> When the fleet is sailing in a wrong direction, the pilots must reverse their course to bring them to the haven where they would be. All systems of government that Dante saw required that change. Then there should be no more the spectacle of promise without performance, flowers without fruit.

*The Central Sun—The Hierarchy of Angels in concentric Circles*

WHEN, as against man's life of miseries,  
 The truth had been unfolded to mine eye  
 By her who doth my mind imparadise,  
 As one who in a mirror doth espy  
 The flame of candle that behind him burns, 5  
 Ere he has it in sight or phantasy,  
 And then, to see if true the mirror, turns,  
 And sees that it is with the image wed,  
 As music that to fit the metre learns,  
 So in my mind what then I did is read, 10  
 As on those beauteous eyes I fixed my gaze,  
 Whence Love made cords by which my soul was  
 led.  
 And as I turned me, and mine eyes did raise  
 To that which meets them in the circling sphere,  
 Whene'er we have clear vision of its ways, 15  
 I saw a point so radiant appear,  
 So keenly bright, it needs must be the eye  
 Should shrink and close before its brightness clear.

<sup>8</sup> The word "imparadise" is noticeable as having been reproduced by Milton (*P. L.* iv. 506).

<sup>9</sup> The comparison within comparison suggests the studies both in optics and music in which Dante delighted. He recognises an identity of law between the correspondence of the reflection to the flame and of music to metre. We are reminded of Bacon's question of "Is the delight of the quavering upon a stop in music the same with the playing of the light upon the water?" (*Adv. bk. i. Works*, i. p. 45, ed. 1753). Dante sets forth his own experience as he gazed on the eyes of Beatrice, and saw that they mirrored the new Heaven (*volume*, as in C. xxiii. 112), *sc.* the Empyrean. He sees at once a point infinitely small and infinitely bright, the symbolic manifestation of the Divine Nature, and round it, beginning at a distance like that which parts the moon from its halo, are nine concentric circles of fire, revolving, the nearest with a motion as swift as that of the *Primum Mobile*, the others with a speed and a brightness diminishing as their distance from the centre increased. These, as we learn from ll. 98-129, answer to the nine orders of the hierarchy of Heaven. The order is, it will be noted, the inverse of that of the actual *cosmos* as represented in the Ptolemaic astronomy. There the smallest sphere, that of the moon, nearest the earth, was the slowest in its motion; here that which is nearest to the First Cause as its centre is the swiftest. The poet's mind seeks to know the meaning of the contrast. Was not this which he looked on the "idea" in the Platonic sense, the archetype of the

The smallest star which from the earth we spy  
 A moon would seem, with it set side by side, 20  
 As star may be compared with star on high.  
 At such a distance as a halo wide  
 Doth compass round the light that paints its hue,  
 When mist that forms it is least rarefied,  
 Thus round the point a circle came in view 25  
 Of fire, so swift that it would leave behind  
 The sphere that swiftest doth its course pursue.  
 And this within a second was confined,  
 That by a third, that by a fourth again,  
 That by a fifth, round which a sixth did wind. 30  
 Then came a seventh, so wide in its domain  
 That Juno's herald, though full span it won,  
 Would fail its widespread circuit to contain ;  
 So too the eighth and ninth, and each did run 25  
 More slowly round as it was far away,  
 As measured by its number, from the One.  
 And that had flame the clearest in its ray  
 Which was least distant from the pure spark's light,  
 Because, I deem, more in its Truth it lay.  
 My Lady, who beheld my doubting plight, 40  
 Yearning to know, said : " From that point depends  
 All Heaven, yea, and Nature, depth and height.  
 That circle see which nearest to it bends,  
 And know its motion is thus hurried on  
 By the hot love which spur to impulse lends." 45

visible creation? Why was the copy so unlike the pattern? Dante may have had Hugh of St. Victor (*Cal. Hier.* c. 15) in his thoughts.

<sup>32</sup> The messenger of Juno is, of course, Iris, the rainbow (*Æn.* iv. 693 ; *Met.* i. 270, xi. 585). The largest rainbow, if one could imagine it completing its circle, would be small as compared with the seventh circle, and the eighth and ninth were, of course, wider still. For another rainbow comparison see *Purg.* xxi. 50.

<sup>39</sup> Dante guesses that the brightness of the innermost circle arises from its sharing more than others in the truth of the Divine Nature, and Beatrice confirms his conjecture by the statement that he is looking on the centre from which all Heaven and Nature depend. The words are an actual quotation from Arist. *Met.* ii. 7.

<sup>43</sup> In the physical *cosmos* the *Primum Mobile* moves with a marvellous velocity through its intense desire to unite itself with the calm motionless



And I to her: "If our world did but run  
 With order, as I see these wheels go round,  
 I were content with knowledge I have won;  
 But in the world of sense we still have found  
 The circles tending more to grow divine, 59  
 The farther they recede from central ground.  
 Wherefore, to satisfy this wish of mine  
 In this shrine wondrous and angelical,  
 Which hath but light and love for boundary line,  
 I needs must hear how thus it doth befall, 55  
 The copy and the pattern differ so;  
 For to myself 'tis fruitless wonder all."  
 "If thine own fingers scanty skill shall show  
 Such knot to loose, it should not wonder wake,  
 So hard for want of trying doth it grow." 60  
 Thus far my Lady; then she said: "Now take  
 That which I tell, if thou would'st have thy will,  
 And thereupon thy wits more subtle make.  
 The spheres corporeal more or less space fill,  
 According to the more or less of might 65  
 Which throughout every portion worketh still.

Empyrean, which is the dwelling-place of God (*Conv.* ii. 4). In the spiritual *cosmos* love is also, in like manner, the cause of the rapid motion of the innermost circle of the Seraphim, who excel in love and are nearest to the Divine Presence.

<sup>53</sup> So in C. xxvii. 112. The Love and Light of the Empyrean encompass the *Primum Mobile*. Here God, who is Light and Love, is the only limit of the Heaven, which is, in the strictest sense of the words, an angelic Temple.

<sup>60</sup> The problem has been already stated in the note on l. 9. There is apparently a half-conscious pride in the subtlety that can state such a problem, which seems at first insoluble, because none have tried to solve it. The words contain, if I mistake not, the key to much that seems to us most wonderful in the supersubtle speculation of Aquinas or Dionysius.

<sup>64</sup> The solution is given almost as a revelation of the higher wisdom. The relation between the spiritual and the material worlds is that of an inverted order. In the latter, greater perfection requires greater expansion, and so the *Primum Mobile* corresponds to the circle of the Seraphim who love God best and know Him most perfectly. See note on l. 43. That key being given, the problem is practically solved, and the same correspondence is to be traced in the remaining circles. The questioner has to look to the virtue, the distinguishing character, of each circle of the angelic hierarchy. The English reader may be referred once more to Bacon (*Adv.* bk. i., *Works*, vol. i. p. 19, ed. 1753) for an interesting parallelism to Dante's view.

A greater bliss doth greater good requite,  
 And greater bliss a greater frame must show,  
 If all its parts attain their fullest height.  
 So this which sweepeth all the spheres below, 70  
 As it moves onward, answers to the sphere  
 Which, loving most, most fully too doth know.  
 Wherefore, if thou survey with vision clear  
 The virtue, not the semblance that we see,  
 Of these substantial forms which round appear, 75  
 Thou'lt see a wondrous correspondency  
 Of more with greater, less with smaller here,  
 And every heaven with its Mind agree."  
 As clear and calm the ærial hemisphere  
 Shineth, when Boreas from that cheek doth blow 80  
 Whence with a gentler force his breezes veer,  
 So that it clears, and bids the cloud-rack go  
 Which erst obscured it, and the sky smiles bright  
 With all the beauties that its regions show,  
 So was I then, when me to help aright 85  
 My Lady thus took thought with her clear speech,  
 And Truth, like star in heaven, was full in sight.  
 And when those words of hers their goal did reach,  
 As molten iron sparkleth all around,  
 So sparkled then those circles all and each; 90  
 And every spark did more and more abound  
 In fiery light, and so their number grew  
 Beyond the "chess-board's doubling" problem's  
 bound.

<sup>81</sup> The wind that clears the sky from mists is the north-east, as less stormy than that which blows from the north-west; the Thracian breezes, which are the companions of spring of Hor. *Od.* i. 25, 11, iv. 12, 2; Virg. *Æn.* xii. 365. So, with Dante, were the mists of doubt driven away by the truth thus revealed to him. Comp. *Boeth.* i. 2.

<sup>91</sup> The angelic orders rejoice in the truth, and show their joy by a new brightness, shown by countless sparkles.

<sup>93</sup> The doubling of the chess, *sc.* the raising it to the 63rd power, rises out of the story that the inventor of the game asked for his reward one grain of wheat for the first square of the chess-board, two for the second, and so on; the result being 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 (*Scart*). The problem, like the game itself, is said to have come from India, but when or how the game

And then from choir to choir Hosannas flew  
 To that fixed Point which keepeth every one,  
 And will keep ever, in its *Ubi* true;  
 And she, who saw what thoughts of doubt had won  
 Power o'er my mind, said: "These, the circles  
 prime,  
 The Seraphim and Cherubim have shown.

95

passed into Europe there is no sufficient evidence to say. A treatise, *Solatium Ludi Scacchorum*, is said to have been written by Jacopo Dacciesole before 1200, and Hyde (*Historia Scacchiludii*, 1694) quotes some Saxon verses in which it is named, which would imply that it was known at an earlier date than that of the first Crusade. It appears in Chaucer, *Book of the Duchesse*, where we have the description of a game at chess between Man and Fortune, in which the former is checkmated, and in the *Romance of King Alisaunder*, l. 2096 (after A.D. 1300). Some light is thrown on the history of the game in Italy by the fact that in A.D. 1267 a Saracen chess-player came to Florence, who, in the Palace of the People and in the presence of Guido Novello, carried on three games simultaneously with the best players of the city, looking only at one; won two of these, and got a drawn game in the third (*Malisp.* c. 189). In 1312 Richard of Camino was assassinated as he was playing at chess (C. ix. 50 n.). One wonders (1) whether Dante played chess as well as worked the sum, and (2) whether he got at his result with Roman or Arabic numerals, by simple multiplication and addition, or by the algebraic formula of geometrical progression

$$n$$

$$r-1$$

S=a —. The Arabic numerals and the abbreviated methods of Algebra

$$r-1$$

had been introduced into Europe by Leonardo Bonacci of Pisa in his *Liber Abaci*, circ. 1202, and both Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II.) and Robert Grossetête are credited with some knowledge of the latter. They occur in a MS. in C. C. C. Cambridge of 1330, are named in Chaucer's *Dreme* in 1375 as still "new." Merchants' accounts were kept in Roman numerals till the middle of the 16th century (Peacock in *Encyc. Metrop.* art. *Arithmetic*). The result of the sum might well seem the symbol of the innumerable company of the angels. The fact that all the statues of the west front of Wells Cathedral north of the west door are marked with Arabic numerals, while those on the south are marked with Roman, may indicate either the first introduction of the former or the contemporaneous use of the two (*Trans. of Som. Arch. Soc.* xix. p. 42).

<sup>94</sup> And from all that company there comes the loud Hosanna. That centre, the Light and Love which God is, keeps them each in his rank. So they have been since their creation; so they shall be to eternity.

<sup>95</sup> The classification is mainly based upon the treatise *De Cœlesti Hierarchiâ*, which bears the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. There are three main orders, each with three sub-sections. Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 108, 1-8) follows Dionysius as Dante does here. A somewhat different grouping is given by Gregory the Great (*Hom. in Evang.* 34), and again by Dante himself in *Conv.* ii. 6. It is not, I think, worth while to tabulate the different arrangements. Comp. *D. C. A.* art. *Angels*; *D. C. B.* art. *Angels* and *Dionysius the Areopagite*; and Westcott's art. on *Dionysius* in *Cont. Rev.* vol. v. The question whether St. Paul's enumeration in *Rom.*

As if constrained, they speed in such quick time 100  
     To be as like the Point as they may be,  
     And their power varies with their sight sublime.  
 Those other Loves, which moving round we see,  
     Are known as Thrones of God's face manifest,  
     And so they close the first trine company. 105  
 And thou should'st know that all are so far blest  
     As doth their vision in the abyss descend  
     Of Truth, wherein each intellect finds rest.  
 Hence may be seen how bliss attains its end,  
     Founded on that one single power of sight, 110  
     And not on love, which after doth attend.  
 And of that power to see, the standard right  
     Is merit, child of God's grace and good-will;  
     Thus they advance from step to step of height.  
 The other Triad, which doth burgeon still 115  
     In this eternal spring, which no blast drear  
     Despoils when Aries comes with night-frost chill,

viii. 38, *Eph.* i. 21, *Col.* i. 16, ii. 15, implies the classification which was afterwards developed from it, belongs to Biblical exegesis rather than to that of Dante.

<sup>99</sup> The Seraphim and Cherubim, differing in that the former excel in love and the other in knowledge, are alike in this, that each desires to be conformed to the likeness of what it knows and loves.

<sup>104</sup> The Thrones are those who are mirrors of the Divine Mind in its fulness (*C.* ix. 61), and are therefore the spirits through whom it executes its judgments, on which its glory rests. The bliss of each of the three ranks is perfect in kind, though it may differ in its degree.

<sup>110</sup> The definition is thoroughly Aristotelian. Perfect happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*) is a contemplative energy. The subtlety of the scholastic mind had raised the question whether this was a sufficient account of the blessedness of the angelic spirits, and some, *e.g.*, Scotus, placed that blessedness in the fruition of the love of God. Dante, following Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 2. 3, 1-8; iii. *Suppl.* 97, 1-3), treats the love of God as a sequence and supplement of the knowledge.

<sup>112</sup> The law that the vision of God varies in its clearness according to the merits of those who contemplate it is a general one, and holds good of the spirits of just men made perfect as well as of the angels.

<sup>115</sup> The second triplet includes the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers. They rejoice in an eternal spring, which is not changed, as the earthly spring changes, with the order of the seasons. When Aries is seen by night, *i.e.*, after the autumnal equinox, no winter passes over its Hosanna chant, as on earth over the green fields. The verb which Dante uses, *sverna*, literally "gets out of winter," "unwinters" (if we may coin the word), had come to be used of the song of birds in spring-time.

For ever warbles forth Hosanna clear,  
 With triple songs that echo in the three  
 Great ranks of joy where they intrined appear. 120  
 Three hosts divine are in this hierarchy—  
 Dominions first, then those as Virtues known,  
 Then Powers, that fill the third place in degree.  
 Then in the twain whose dance is last but one,  
 Archangels, Principalities, wheel round, 125  
 And sports of Angels have the last place won.  
 These orders all with upward gaze are found,  
 And downward so prevail that each doth draw,  
 And each is drawn, to God in love profound.  
 And Dionysius with such yearning awe 130  
 These orders gave himself to contemplate,  
 That he, as I, assigned their names and law;  
 But Gregory from him did separate;  
 And so when he in Heaven had oped his eyes,  
 He smiled at that his notion of our state. 135  
 And let it not, I pray, thy mind surprise  
 That mortal man should utter truth so deep;  
 For he who saw it taught in wondrous wise  
 Full many a truth which these our circles keep."

<sup>121</sup> The term *Dee*, literally goddesses, is used, like "gods" in *Ps.* lxxxii. 6 and *John* x. 35, for those who are, in the measure of their capacity, sharers in the Divine Nature.

<sup>124</sup> The Principalities and Archangels are, as it were, the subalterns of the army of the Lord of Sabaoth, the rank and file of which is made up of angels.

<sup>129</sup> Speculative critics (*e.g.*, Tagliazucchi, a mathematician of Turin) have found in this line an anticipation of Newton's theory of universal attraction. They forget that Dante is describing the spiritual, not the material, universe.

<sup>130</sup> The difference between Gregory and Dionysius was that the former inverted the relative positions of the Principalities and Virtues, putting Powers in the first class, Principalities in the second, Thrones in the third. So Dante had himself done (*Conv.* ii. 6) at a time when he cared less for the authority of Aquinas than he did when he wrote the *Paradise*. He smiles, as it were, like Gregory, at his former error.

<sup>132</sup> The words of 2 *Cor.* xii. 4 were supposed to include a complete vision of the heavenly hosts, which St. Paul, in his turn, was believed to have revealed to the Arcopagite.

*Beatrice on the Creation and Fall of Angels, and on the Faults  
and Follies of Preachers*

WHEN both the children of Latona old,  
 In shelter of the Ram and of the Scales,  
 The zone of the horizon doth enfold,  
 As is the time when from those balanced scales  
 They part, both one and other, from their place, 5  
 Till, changing hemisphere, the balance fails,  
 So long, with look which winning smile did grace,  
 Was Beatricè silent, looking still  
 Upon the Point which I was weak to face.  
 Then she began: "I speak, nor ask thy will 10  
 What thou would'st know, for I have seen it there  
 Wherein each *ubi, quando*, centres still.  
 Not that He sought a greater good to share—  
 That might not be—but that His glory great  
 Might, as it shines, the name 'I AM' declare, 15  
 In His eternity, His timeless state,  
 Beyond all grasp of thought, as seemed Him right,  
 The Eternal Love in new loves did dilate.  
 Not that He lay before in sleep of night,  
 For no Before or After did precede 20  
 God's moving on the waters in His might.

1-6 After Dante's fashion, the simple fact that Beatrice was silent for an instant, as long as it takes for sun or moon to rise above or sink below the horizon, is described in a somewhat complicated fashion. The sun and moon are represented at the moment of the equinox, the former in Aries, the latter in Libra.

<sup>9</sup> Beatrice sees the unspoken thoughts of Dante in the mirror of the Divine Mind, which is the ground of all space and time. Those thoughts are questions such as Aquinas had asked and answered (*Summ.* i. 60-62) as to the nature, creation, and function of angels.

<sup>13</sup> The first of the questions was one which had largely occupied the minds of the schoolmen. What motive led the Divine Mind to break, as it were, the silence of eternity by the act of creation? He was bound by no chain of necessity; He could not add to His own perfection. It was, therefore, that He might manifest His glory, the glory of the I AM, to others. So Aquinas (*c. Genē* ii. 46). In eternity, outside the conditions of time and space, the Eternal Love was pleased to reveal Himself in new loves. It was not as if he had been inactive before creation, for in eternity there is no before or after. So Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 10, 1) and Augustine (*Conf.* xi. 13).

Matter and form together did proceed,  
 In purest state, to act which could not err,  
 As three-stringed bow sends forth a triple reed. 25  
 And as in amber, glass or crystal clear  
 So shines a ray, that from its first descent  
 Till all is bright, no interval is there,  
 Thus from its Lord the tri-formed effluence sent  
 Flashed into being once, and once for all, 30  
 Nor did, as it began, degrees present.  
 Order and form as concreate did fall  
 With substances, and those were as the crown  
 Which purest act did into being call.  
 Mere potency is seated lowest down, 35  
 And potency and act unite midway,  
 And how to disunite is known to none.  
 Angels were made by God, did Jerome say,  
 Long tract of ages ere in order next  
 The other world was started on its way; 40  
 But this is writ in many a sacred text  
 Of writers whom the Holy Ghost did teach;  
 If there thou seek, thou wilt not be perplex'd.

Those distinctions of time and space began when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (*Gen.* i. 2), for time is the measure of motion.

<sup>24</sup> The image is taken from the crossbows of ancient warfare which discharged three arrows at once. Here the three arrows are (1) pure matter, the groundwork of the visible creation; (2) pure form or spirit, the angelic orders; (3) the ordered *cosmos*, and specially man, as uniting both the elements. And this creation was instantaneous. The whole universe flashed, as it were, into existence instantaneously, as a ray passes through crystal. The imagery reminds us, like *C.* ii. 97-105, of the student of experimental optics.

<sup>31</sup> In that creation the angels, as pure form, *i.e.*, spirit, held the highest place (*Purg.* xi. 3). Pure matter or potency, as capable of higher possibilities of Nature, held the lowest. The visible cosmos, animate and inanimate, held the intermediate place.

<sup>37</sup> Dante, as a disciple of Aquinas, who asserts the simultaneousness of the creation of the whole universe, including the angels (*Summ.* i. 61, 3), places his authority above that of St. Jerome, who had incidentally taught (in a note on *Tit.* i. 2) that the latter had been created ages before the creation of the material universe. Comp. Hugh of St. Victor, *Summ. Sent.* ii. 1.

<sup>40</sup> The texts which Dante may have had in his mind are *Gen.* i. 1 (so *Aquin. l. c.*); *Ecclus.* xviii. 1; *Ps.* civ. 4, 5. Line 41 implies the mediæval theory of inspiration as equivalent to dictation. The writers of Scripture were but the penmen of the Spirit.

And Reason too the same belief doth reach,  
 Which scarce could suffer that the powers that move  
 Should lack completeness that belongs to each. 45  
 Now know'st thou when and where these forms of  
 love  
 Were made, and how; so thus are quenched well  
 In thy desire three fires that burnt to prove.  
 Nor could'st thou numbers up to twenty tell  
 So soon as part of that angelic host 50  
 Brought on your lower world disturbance fell.  
 The other part remained, and took their post  
 With wondrous joy, as thou hast here beheld,  
 And never have their circling motion lost.  
 Through the accursèd pride were they expelled 55  
 Of him whom thou hast looked upon below,  
 By all the weight of all the world fast held.  
 Those whom thou see'st here did their meekness  
 show,  
 Acknowledging the Goodness that had made  
 Them quick and prompt such mysteries to know; 60

43 An *a priori* argument is added to that from Scripture. The angels were, as in *Conv.* ii. 5, *Canz.* xiv. 1, the movers of the spheres. It was not easy to conceive of their having existed without the function which was the final cause of their existence, and the absence of which therefore involved imperfection.

47 The word "elect" is used instead of "created," because the faithful angels—faithful to God's election—are spoken of. The rebellious angels also had been made with a like election; but they cast it away, as Christians cast away the electing grace which makes them children of God (*Eph.* i. 4; *Pet.* i. 10).

49 So far three of the questions had been answered. There remained that which asked how long the rebel angels remained faithful to their Maker. Dante again follows Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 63, 6) in maintaining that it was all but instantaneous. To count from one to twenty gave an ample margin for Lucifer's contemplation of his own perfections (*Purg.* xii. 25), for his aspiring to be equal with God (*Isai.* xiv. 12, 13), for his leading innumerable other angels into rebellion. Milton seems to have demanded more time for his episode of the war in Heaven (*P. L.* bk. v. 1). The fall of the angels (as in *H.* xxxiv. 121-126) disturbed the matter which underlies the elements of the *cosmos*.

53 The "art" which the faithful angels learnt was that of contemplating, praising, adoring God as the centre of their being.

55 Comp. *H.* xxxiv. 34.

58 The proud self-exalting angels fell to extremest degradation. Those



And hence their powers of vision were displayed,  
 By grace illumined and by merit too,  
 So that their will in full resolve is stayed.  
 I would not have thee doubt, but hold as true,  
 That in receiving grace comes merit high, 65  
 E'en as affection opes in measure due.  
 Now, looking round on this Consistory,  
 Thou may'st enough contemplate, if my speech  
 Be grasped, without a further commentary.  
 But since on earth the schools a doctrine teach 70  
 That the angelic nature, in its span,  
 To thought, and will, and memory doth reach,  
 More will I speak, that thou may'st clearly scan  
 The truth below confused through want of skill,  
 In teachings thus ambiguous in their plan. 75  
 These substances, since joy their life did fill  
 From God's own face, their glance have ne'er let  
 stray  
 From Him with whom is nothing hidden still;  
 Hence is their vision never drawn away  
 By a new object, nor need care to take 80  
 Facts to recall, because they do not stay;

that were more modest owned that they had nothing they had not received, and therefore received more illuminating grace, and then, on the theory of a "grace of condignity or congruity" (*Art.* xiii.), the gift of perseverance, so that they could no longer fall from their high estate. Grace, therefore, does not exclude merit; nay, rather, there is a merit in the very act of accepting it. So the angels had, in scholastic language, merited their blessedness (Aquinas. *Summ.* i. 62, 84-88).

<sup>67</sup> The word "consistory" had been used in *Purg.* ix. 24 of the deities of Olympus. Here it is applied to the "general assembly" of the saints and angels (*Ileb.* xii. 23). Comp. the use of "*cloister*" in *Purg.* xv. 57, xxvi. 128.

<sup>70</sup> The bold self-confidence which had led Dante to challenge comparison with Ovid and Lucan (*H.* xxv. 94-99), almost to compete with *Ezekiel* and *St. John* in apocalyptic imagery (*Purg.* xxix., xxxiii.), is with him still. In one point the scholar can correct the master, and he even ventures to criticise Aquinas. That thinker had taught that angels think and remember as men do (*Summ.* i. 54, 55). Not so is the poet's judgment. They have no need, and therefore no power, of memory; for they see all things in the Divine Mind, are mirrors of that Mind, and in it there is no past, and therefore no memory. No new object can interrupt their vision; and there being no interruption of an ever present perception, there can be no memory,

So that below men dream, although awake,  
 Believing, not believing, in their speech:  
 This last it is more guilt and shame doth make.  
 Not by one path do ye your wisdom teach, 85  
 As ye philosophise; so leads astray  
 The love of show and fancy swaying each.  
 Yet e'en on this less weight of scorn we lay,  
 Here in this Heaven, than when the Sacred Book  
 Is thrust aside or made false part to play. 90  
 They think not there how much of blood it took  
 To sow it in the world, and what high praise  
 Is his who humbly turns on it to look.

which implies that interruption. The refining subtlety of the scholastic mind may almost be said to culminate in this speculative theory.

<sup>82</sup> The passage finds a parallel in C. xiii. 126. In this matter of the memory of the angels he passes judgment on two classes of waking dreamers. Some believe in their own speculations, and have no heretical animus. Some maintain theories which they do not believe, for the sake of startling men and winning praise by paradoxes; and this, as of the very essence of heresy, brings more guilt. We have no adequate data for deciding what teachers Dante had in view under either category. The context would seem to suggest that he places Albert of Cologne, who also attributed memory to angels, and Aquinas in the former group. I surmise that some theological disputants whom he had encountered at Verona, or, it may be, Paris, came under the heavier condemnation.

<sup>85</sup> The condemnation of error is carried farther. Men were following each his own self-chosen path, whereas there was but one way that led to the one Truth. What a later age learnt to call Latitudinarianism, the belief that all the wanderings of error will at last converge to truth, found no favour in Dante's eyes. What he saw in such wanderings was the preference of counterfeits to reality; above all, an absorbing egotism. Some of us are perhaps tempted to ask whether the judge was altogether free from the failing which he thus condemns?

<sup>88</sup> Errors in speculative philosophy were, however, less evil than the neglect or perversion of Scripture, and these, as he listened to preachers in Verona or Ravenna, seemed to him to swarm on every side. They dealt with it as with any other book, forgetting that it had been bought with the blood of the Saints, and that lowliness in reading it was the condition of illumination. It grieved his soul to see how it was wrested, what idle questions men wrangled over as they expounded it. Some explained the darkness at the Crucifixion as an eclipse, and then, contrary to the axiom, *miracula non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem*, assumed that the full moon became a new moon for those three hours. That, of course, the astronomer-poet could not stand. Others maintained that the light of the sun was not only intercepted "over all the land" of Palestine, but absolutely failed, so that there was darkness in Spain and India, two ideal horizons of the land hemisphere, as well as in Judæa. Apparently Dante thought this an irrational extension of the supernatural. His own position seems to have been that of one who accepts the fact on the authority of

For outward show each one his wit displays,  
 His own inventions form the preacher's theme, 95  
 And all the Gospel story silent stays.  
 This saith the moon did intercept the gleam  
 Of sunlight at the Christ's death-agony,  
 So that to earth its radiance could not stream;  
 This, that the light itself was quenched on high, 100  
 And so alike in India and in Spain,  
 As with the Jews, such darkness met the eye.  
 Nor doth our Florence such a crowd contain  
 Of Bindi, Lapi, as are tales like these,  
 Which through the year make pulpits ring again, 105  
 So that the lambs, in ignorance, at ease,  
 Turn from the pasture fed with wind alone,  
 Yet find in ignorance no excusing pleas.

Scripture, and confesses his ignorance as to the cause. I adopt the reading "*ed altri*" instead of "*e mente*," which finds favour with some critics (*Benv.*, *Phil.*). Here also Dante differs from Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 44), and from Jerome.

<sup>103</sup> The two names, Lapo, short for Jacopo, Bindo for Ildebrando, are given, like our Tom and Jack, as the commonest at Florence. Perhaps they were so common that they were avoided by the families whose names appear in history. Lapo Salterello is one instance of the former name, but I do not recollect meeting with a Bindo.

<sup>105</sup> Like all other men who have their share of the prophetic element of character, Dante vexed his soul with the thought of the wasted opportunities of the pulpit. Profitless discussions about things beyond the limit of the knowable, idle jests, and tales that were "not convenient," made up a large portion of the preaching that he had heard in Italian cities. It would be a dreary and profitless task to collect instances of this abuse. Those who are acquainted with mediæval sermons will recognise the truth of the description. I content myself with quoting the words of another man of genius, probably Dante's teacher, on the preaching of his time, which he describes as containing "*nec sublimitas sermonis, nec sapientiæ magnitudo, sed infinita puerilis stultitia et vilificatio sermonum Dei*." There was absolutely "*nulla utilitas*" in it. Of all the preachers he had heard, one only had reached at once his mind and his heart, and that was Berthold of Regensburg, of the Franciscan Order. R. Bacon (*Op. Tert.* c. 75, *ad fin.*).

<sup>106</sup> Were the lines in Milton's mind when he wrote (*Lyc.* 125), "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed," or was the thought derived by both from *Ezek.* xxxiv. 3, or was it in each case a self-originated parable?

<sup>108</sup> The ignorance of the flock was not of the kind that could be pleaded as an excuse. They all had some knowledge of Christian truth, and the most elementary knowledge should have taught them a distaste for the rubbish which they heard from priests and friars.

Christ said not to His primal flock, 'Go on,  
 And to the world proclaim an idle tale,' 110  
 But gave to them the Truth as corner-stone;  
 And with such might it came from organs frail,  
 That, in their warring for the Faith's clear light,  
 As shield and spear the Gospel did avail.  
 Now is our preaching done with jestings slight 115  
 And mockings, and if men but laugh agape,  
 The cowl puffs out, nor ask men if 'tis right;  
 Yet such a bird doth nestle in their cape,  
 That, if the crowd beheld it, they would know  
 What pardons they rely on for escape. 120  
 And thus such madness there on earth doth grow,  
 That, without proof of any evidence,  
 To each Indulgence eager crowds will flow.  
 So grow Antonio's swine in corpulence,  
 And others plenty who are worse than swine, 125  
 Paying their way with false, unminted pence.

109 We note in the Italian "*convento*" the recurrence of the idea as applied to Christ and His Apostles (*Purg.* xv. 57, xxvi. 128.) The preaching which He commended was quite other than that which Dante condemned. Then His preachers were champions of the truth, fighting with shield and lance in her defence (*Eph.* vi. 13-17).

116 Of yore men had preached that they might draw tears of repentance from those who heard them; now they were content to excite laughter, and the swelling hood became a symbol of the preacher's swollen vanity. If these listening crowds could only see the devil-bird (*H.* xxii. 96, xxxiv. 47) that was nestling in the peak of that hood, they would take a truer measure of the indulgences which the preacher offered them. *Vill.* (xii. 4) notices, among the French fashions introduced into Florence in 1342, the lengthening of the *becchetto* or peak of the hood till it touched the ground. He is speaking, however, of lay costume, not of that of the friars. For once, in this protest against indulgences (then a comparatively recent innovation, introduced by Alexander III., 1159-1180, but first brought into prominence by the Jubilee of Boniface VIII., 1300), Dante anticipates the language of Luther.

124 St. Anthony, the hermit-saint of Egypt (A.D. 251-356), was commonly represented (as in the pictures of the elder Teniers and other painters) with a pig at his feet, as the symbol of the unclean spirit that had tempted him; and so St. Anthony's pig had become proverbial. There is, if I mistake not, a special significance in Dante's use of the phrase. Towards the close of the eleventh century France was ravaged by an epidemic, which was known as the *Morbus Sacer*, probably a form of erysipelas. The help of St. Anthony was, for some reason, involved as a healer, and the disease came to be popularly known as St. Anthony's fire. A young noble, Gaston of Dauphiné (the Saint's body was believed to be interred in the church of Motte St.

But since we thus have wandered from our line,  
 Now to the straight path turn at last thine eyes,  
 That so brief way with shortened time combine.  
 This order far and wide so multiplies 130  
 From rank to rank, that never speech might tell,  
 Nor thought of man unto their number rise.  
 And if thou dost in Daniel's vision spell,  
 Thou'lt see that, in his thousands manifold,  
 No number definite is visible. 135  
 The primal Light, whose rays the whole enfold,  
 In modes as many is received by each  
 As are the splendours which thereon lay hold.  
 Hence, as the affection follows—so we teach—  
 Close on the thought, the sweetness of their love 140  
 Is hot or tepid, varying thus in each.

Didier, in that province), who had recovered from it, founded a lay brotherhood of St. Anthony (1095) for ministering to the sick. Innocent III. conceded to the brotherhood the privilege of building a church in 1208; Honorius III. raised them to the position of a monastic order; finally, Boniface VIII. placed them, with new privileges, under the Augustinian rule (Hagenbach, in Herzog. *Real. Encycl.* i. 417). The Order became popular in France and Italy, and it was a common act of popular devotion to offer swine to them, which were known as St. Anthony's pigs, and the term, by a natural extension, was applied to all swine kept by monks. There is no evidence that I know of that the Order had a house in Florence, but Sacchetti (*Nov.* cx.) bears testimony to the wide use of the name there. The fact that Boniface VIII. had patronised the Order was enough, I conceive, even if there had not been sufficient reason for it on other grounds, to lead Dante to hold up its members to opprobrium as an instance of monastic degradation. The pigs, *i.e.*, the monks of St. Anthony, grew fat by trading on the superstition of the crowd; concubines and others shared their ill-gotten gains, and they paid for all with indulgences which were of no value, perhaps as issued without adequate authority, perhaps as applied without the implied condition of repentance. Those coins had not come from the mint of Christ and His Church.

127 From this digression, to which Dante had been led probably by his indignation at some specially bad sermon, he returns to the problems connected with the nature of angels. He had already in the squaring of the chess-board (C. xxviii. 93) indicated his estimate of their number; now he refers to the "ten thousand times ten thousand" of *Dan.* vii. 10. The "determinate number" is probably connected with an exposition of *Luke* xv. 4 given by St. Ambrose and Theophylact. The lost sheep were the human race; the ninety and nine were the unfallen angels. Their number was therefore that multiple of the whole family of man in all ages (Trench, *Parables*, p. 364). With this was connected the thought that the "number of the elect" was identical with that of the rebel angels. Every angel, according to his rank and order, reflects and perceives the Divine Light and

So see'st thou of the Power eterne above  
 The breadth and height, reflected o'er and o'er  
 In mirrors where its broken light doth rove,  
 One in itself remaining as before."

145

## CANTO XXX

*The Tenth Heaven—The Empyrean—Beatrice in Glory—The  
 River of Light—The Flowers and the Sparks of Paradise—  
 The Eternal Rose—Henry of Luxemburg.*

Six thousand miles away perchance doth lie  
 A point where noon glows, and this world doth  
 throw

Its shadow all but horizontally,  
 When the high vault of Heaven to us below  
 So deep becomes, that here and there a star  
 Hides from our ken, in this our depth, its glow ;  
 And as the sun's fair handmaid comes from far  
 Advancing, Heaven is closed to mortal eye,  
 Orb after orb, e'en those that brightest are.

5

Not otherwise did that great Triumph high,  
 That plays around the point for me too bright,  
 Which, all-enclosing, seems enclosed to lie,  
 Little by little now withdraw its light ;

10

Whence I to turn to Beatrice was led  
 Both by my love and loss of that great sight.

15

Love, which varies according to the clearness of his vision, the Seraphim ranking highest, as in C. xxviii. 99.

<sup>1</sup> The simple fact of sunrise is described, after Dante's manner (*Purg.* i. 19, ix. 1-9, xix. 1-6), in a somewhat complicated fashion. The circumference of the earth was reckoned by him at about 20,400 miles (*Conv.* iii. 5, 8); therefore, when it is noon (the sixth hour), 6000 miles from us, with us it is the first hour of morning, when the stars begin to disappear, and the shadow of the earth is cast nearly on the plane on which we stand, the sun being on the horizon. Even so did the nine orders of the angels vanish from the poet's eyes. He turns to Beatrice, and she is fairer and more glorious than ever. Only her Creator can comprehend all her glory; and this is because they have passed into the Empyrean Heaven, beyond the *Primum Mobile*,

If all that I of her till now have said  
     Were brought together in one word of praise,  
     For what came then 'twere all too feebly sped.  
 The beauty that I saw surpassed all ways,  
     Not of our ken alone, but well I trow, 20  
     Its Maker only can that joy appraise.  
 At such a pass my failure is, I know,  
     Far worse than poets, wrestling with their theme,  
     Tragic or comic, e'er are wont to show. 25  
 For as our sight is dazed by sunlight beam,  
     So e'en to recollect that smile of grace  
     Makes all my mind bewildered as in dream.  
 From the first day I looked upon her face,  
     In this our life, to this my vision clear,  
     In line unbroken I my song might trace ; 30  
 But now perforce I may not persevere,  
     To follow all her beauty with my song,  
     E'en as each artist knows his limit near.  
 Such as I leave to some more worthy tongue  
     Than speaketh through my trumpet, which doth 35  
     lead  
 To speedy close its arduous task and long,

the "calm and pacific sphere which is the abode of God and of the saints" (*Conv.* ii. 4).

<sup>22</sup> The words are general. No poet was ever so overpowered by the greatness of his theme as Dante now felt himself : but the "comic" probably refers to the title he had given his poem, and the "tragic" to Virgil (*H.* xvi. 128, xx. 113, xxi. 2).

<sup>25</sup> The comparison appears also in *V. N.* c. 42 ; *Canz.* xii. 16, 62 ; *Conv.* iii. 8. Here it is intensified by the statement that it is not the actual glory, but only the bare memory of it which thus overpowers him.

<sup>28</sup> We are nearing the close of the poem, the close also of the poet's life, and he still falls back on that first May morning, of which he tells the tale in *V. N.* c. 2. All that he had felt from that day to the present hour he had sought, not altogether in vain, to tell. Now he renounced the attempt to describe it in words, as every artist must renounce the attempt to realise his highest ideal of perfection.

<sup>34</sup> The "more worthy tongue" is not the voice of a mightier poet, but, as in *Purg.* xxx. 13, the trump of the Last Judgment, which will reveal the full glory of the saints.

With mien and voice of one well skilled to speed  
 In guidance she began: "Now far above,  
 From widest orb we reach Heaven's light indeed—  
 Light of the intellect replete with love, 40  
 Love of true good replete with perfect bliss,  
 Bliss that doth far above all sweetness prove.  
 Here shalt thou see both armies, that and this,  
 Of Paradise, and in the self-same guise  
 As thou shalt see when the last Judgment is." 45  
 As sudden lightning-flash upon our eyes  
 Scatters the visual spirits, so that sight  
 Is gone, though clearest forms before us rise,  
 So round about me shone a living light  
 And left me so enswathèd in its veil 50  
 Of brightness, that nought met my gaze aright.  
 "The love which doth to calm this heaven prevail  
 Such welcome ever gives to spirit new,  
 That for its flame meet candle may not fail."  
 No sooner had within me those words few 55  
 Found entrance, than I felt that I arose  
 Above all virtue that before I knew,  
 And a new power of vision in me glows,  
 So that no light can boast such purity,  
 But that mine eyes would meet it with repose. 60

<sup>37</sup> Possibly " . . . of a leader freed from his task " (*Butl.*).

<sup>39</sup> The Empyrean lies outside the limitations of the *Primum Mobile*, outside, therefore, the time which is the measure of motion. Light, love, joy are its only elements.

<sup>43</sup> The two companies are the spirits of the just and the angels. The former is to be seen in vision as it will be seen in the Last Day; no longer, as before, simple forms of light (C. x. 64, xxx. 64, *et al.*), but with human form and features.

<sup>46</sup> The first sensation is that of a flash of lightning, not passing away, but enwrapping the seer as in a robe of light. At first he could see nothing more. That, Beatrice tells him, is the welcome—the *salute* (we note the reappearance of the memorable word of the *V. N.* c. 10, 11) which the Empyrean gives to those who enter it; and it fits the candle for the flame, —gives, that is, the strength required for the new life, and so the new-comer finds himself no longer dazzled even by the clearest light.



I saw a glory like a stream flow by,  
 In brightness rushing, and on either shore  
 Were banks that with spring's wondrous hues might  
 vie.  
 And from that river living sparks did soar,  
 And sank on all sides in the flow'rets' bloom, 65  
 Like precious rubies set in golden ore.  
 Then, as if drunk with all the rich perfume,  
 Back to the wondrous torrent did they roll,  
 And as one sank another filled its room.  
 "The high desire that burns within thy soul 70  
 To gain full knowledge of the wondrous sight,  
 More joy gives me the more it spurns control.  
 But of this water thou must drink aright,  
 Ere thou canst slake thy strong desire to know."  
 So spake the Sun that filled mine eyes with light, 75  
 And then: "The stream, and topazes that go  
 Now in, now out, and smile of pleasant flowers,  
 Of their true essence but dim preludes show:  
 Not that the things are hard, but that thy powers 80  
 Of vision are defective found, and weak,  
 And ne'er have looked on glory such as ours."  
 There is no babe who dost so quickly seek  
 His mother's breast, if he should wake, perchance,  
 At hour so late it doth his custom break,

<sup>61</sup> I have taken "*primavera*," as in *Purg.* xxviii. 51, in the sense of "spring-flowers." Probably the river represents the grace and love of God; the ruby-sparks are the angels; the flowers on the banks are the souls of the righteous; the odours are the "sweet savour" of their merits, and the movements of the sparks represent accordingly the ministries of angels to those souls, ministries of joy and fellowship, as before of help in conflict. In the symbolism of gems the topaz represents the twofold love of God and man (Marbodius, *De Gemmis*, in Neale's *Medieval Hymns*, p. 65).

<sup>73</sup> Men must drink of that river of light, *i.e.*, of God's grace and love, before their thirst for truth (*Purg.* xxi. 1) can be satisfied.

<sup>76</sup> What is seen is but the figure of the Truth, not obscure in itself, but only through the imperfect knowledge of the beholder.

<sup>82</sup> Once more we have one of the poet's studies of child-life (*C.* xxiii. 121, xxx. 140; *Purg.* xxiv. 108, xxx. 44). *Comp.* 1 *Pet.* ii. 2.

As I did, that mine eyes might gaze with glance 85  
 That better mirrored, bending to the wave,  
 Which flows that we in goodness may advance.  
 Soon as I did with its clear waters lave  
 Mine eyelid's edge, to me it did appear  
 As though instead of length, a round it gave. 90  
 Then, as a crowd who masks of revel wear,  
 Seemeth quite other than 'twas wont to be  
 When they have laid aside their alien gear,  
 So for me changed to nobler revelry  
 The flowers and the sparks, and so I saw 95  
 Both of Heaven's cohorts manifest to me.  
 O glory of our God, through which I saw  
 The triumph high of that His kingdom true,  
 Grant me the power to tell what then I saw!  
 A Light there is on high which brings to view 100  
 Him who creates to those that creatures are,  
 Who only in that vision peace ensue;  
 And then it spreads in figure circular  
 So far and wide, that its circumference  
 To gird the sun would be too wide by far. 105  
 All that it shows is one ray's effluence,  
 Reflected from the *Primum Mobile*,  
 Which all its life and power deriveth thence.  
 And as a cliff itself doth mirrored see  
 In lake that lies below, as if it found 110  
 Joy in its wealth of flowers and many a tree,

90-99 As the seer bathes his eyes in the illuminating stream its form changes. It becomes circular like a rose. The sparks and flowers are seen to be the two courts of Heaven, the angels and the saints. To tell of that vision he invokes, no longer Urania only, as in *Purg.* xxix. 41, or Apollo, as in *C. i.* 13, but the very splendour of God Himself, and emphasises the glory of what he saw, as with "Christ" in *C. xii.* 71, xiv. 104, xiv. 104, xxxii. 83, by the triple iteration of the same word rhyming with itself.

102 Comp. *C. iii.* 85, and *Aug. Conf.* i. 1; "*Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.*" That light of God is still, as in *C. xxviii.* 16, the centre of all blessedness; but as we are in the region of the visible universe, it is seen no longer gathered into a point of infinite brightness, but larger than the sun, and its glory spreads forth, beyond the *Primum Mobile*, in the Empyrean, from which that sphere derives its movement.

So, standing o'er that light, all round and round,  
 Thousands I mirrored saw of every grade,  
 All who from us their way have thither wound.  
 And if the lowest rank such glory made, 115  
 Think what must be the magnitude immense  
 Of that bright Rose in furthest petals rayed;  
 Nor in the height nor depth was visual sense  
 Astray, but took the whole wide circuit in,  
 The measure and the mode of joy intense. 120  
 There Far or Near doth neither lose nor win;  
 For where God rules in full immediate power,  
 The laws of Nature find no place therein.  
 And in the gold of that Eternal Flower,  
 Which spreads, dilates, and pours its rich perfume 125  
 To that Sun, ever in its springtide hour,

114 What the poet sees is the company of saints, all who have reached the Empyrean, rising tier above tier, and mirrored, as a flower-clad hill is mirrored in a lake, in the light below, which is as the crystal sea of *Rev.* iv. 6. That forms the golden centre of the heavenly rose, and its petals are the ranks of glorified saints. Of these he describes only the lower ranks, the highest, however, in honour, that so men may judge of what the rest must be. The imagery of the rose was suggested, as some have thought, by the rose-windows of Gothic cathedrals, such as Dante may have seen in France, or Germany or Italy, or, as others, by the golden rose which the Popes gave, and still give, every year to some royal personage whom they delight to honour (*Church, Ess. and Rev.* p. 81). A memorable sermon from Innocent III. (*Serm.* xviii. *Opp.* ed Migne, vol. iv.) on such an occasion dwelling on the mystic symbolism of the form, the colour, the fragrance of the rose, may, on this theory, have suggested Dante's "rose." The Papal rose is mentioned in *Conv.* iv. 29. The former, however, seems to me the more probable; but I do not see that either explanation is required; and it has to be remembered that the larger rose-windows, such as those of Chartres, Laon, and Rheims, belong to the latter part of the 14th, or to the 15th century. The imagery might well, in such a mind as Dante's, be of spontaneous growth. *Comp. C.* xxxii. 40, n.

121 The words seem hardly consistent with l. 115. Probably the *a fortiori* argument of the latter is for the reader, not the poet. For him in that Empyrean there is no far or near. God works immediately, and the natural law that makes the distant less distinct than the near has no place. In this he follows Aquinas: "*Quæ videntur in Deo . . . simul et non successive videntur*" (1 *Summ.* i. 12, 10); "*Divinum lumen æqualiter se habet ad propinquum et distans*" (*Summ.* i. 89, 7).

126 The fragrance of the rose, like the incense of *Rev.* v. 8, is the praise of the saints to the Eternal Sun of Righteousness, which is its centre, the "yellow" of the rose, and which knows no change of season.

As one who fain would speak, and yet is dumb,  
 Me Beatrice drew, and said: "Behold  
 How all the white-robed host have here found  
 room

See what wide space our city doth enfold; 130

See how each seat is furnished with its guest,  
 That few are lacking now within our fold  
 On that high seat whereon thy glances rest,  
 Because above it shines a radiant crown,  
 Before thou sup at this our marriage feast, 135  
 Shall sit th' imperial soul, on earth well known,  
 Henry the Great, whose guidance Italy  
 Shall know ere she be ready to bow down.

Blind greed of gain, that casts its evil eye  
 Upon you, this hath made you like a child 140  
 Who spurns his nurse and will of hunger die.

And in the Court divine shall one be styled  
 Its Prefect, who to tread with him one way,  
 Open or secret, is unreconciled;

<sup>127</sup> Grammatically the comparison may refer to Dante or Beatrice. The context is decisive in favour of the former. For the "white robes" of 129, see *Rev.* vii. 13, 14.

<sup>133</sup> There is a strange pathos in the fact that the first soul named in connection with the rose of Paradise is the Emperor whose death had shattered all Dante's hopes, to whom he had looked as the restorer of a theocratic empire. Here, by the easy artifice of a prophecy *ex eventu*, he offers, as it were, his *apologia* for his own share in the enterprise, the outcome of which had been so disastrous. That vacant throne, the first that met his eyes, was for the soul of Henry. The man had come, but not the hour. Italy had fallen so low in her selfish greed that she needed the discipline of yet severer punishment.

<sup>142</sup> The prophecy as to Henry is followed naturally by one as to Clement V., whose double dealing, from Dante's standpoint, had been the chief cause of the Emperor's failure. For him there is no throne in Heaven, but the pit of the simonists in Hell. Boniface VIII. (the Alagnian) had thrust down Nicolas III. (*H.* xix. 70-87); he was waiting for Clement. Poltmann in his *Römerzug K. Heinrich's VII.* defends the action of Clement and the Roman Curia.

There is something almost startling in the fact that these are the last words of Beatrice. She disappears now, as Virgil had disappeared before, and she leaves Dante, not with any parting words that recall the old love of earth, not with any doxology or revelation of divine truth that might belong to her transfigured character as Divine Wisdom, but with the condemnation of a Pope altogether in the tone of C. xxvii. 40-66; *H.* xix. 1-12. I content myself with calling attention to the fact. I do not venture to explain it.

But little time will God endure his stay  
 In that high office; then shall he be thrown  
 Where Simon Magus doth his forfeit pay,  
 And thrust the Alagnian one step lower down."

145

*The Rose of Heaven—St. Bernard takes the place of Beatrice*

IN fashion of a white rose glorified  
 Shone out on me that saintly chivalry,  
 Whom with His blood Christ won to be His bride;  
 But the other host, which, as it soars on high,  
 Surveys, and sings, the glory of its love,  
 The goodness, too, that gave it majesty,—  
 As swarm of bees that deep in flowerets move  
 One moment, and the next again return  
 To where their labour doth its sweetness prove,—  
 Dipped into that great flower which doth adorn  
 Itself with myriad leaves, then mounting, came  
 There where its love doth evermore sojourn.  
 Their faces had they all of living flame,  
 Their wings of gold, and all the rest was white,  
 That snow is none such purity could claim.  
 And to the flower from row to row their flight  
 They took, and bore to it the peace and glow,  
 Gained by them as they fanned their flanks aright.

5

10

15

<sup>4</sup> The other company is that of angels, who are as bees that plunge in and out of the petals, as before they had been engaged in like ministries, like the ruby-topaz sparks that plunge in and out of the flowers (C. xxx. 64-69), returning to the central "yellow" of the rose, which is the symbol of the presence of God.

<sup>14</sup> White and gold, as in *Dan.* vii. 9, x. 5, are symbols, each of them, of absolute purity.

<sup>16</sup> The function of the angel-bees is to carry to the souls of the saints the peace and ardour which they have themselves gained.

Nor did the crowd then moving to and fro,  
 Between the flower and that which rose above, 20  
 Impede the sight or splendour of the show;  
 Seeing that the light of God doth freely move  
 Through the whole world, as merit makes it right,  
 So that nought there can hindrance to it prove.  
 This realm, secure and full of great delight, 25  
 Filled with the hosts of old or later time,  
 To one sole point turned love alike and sight.  
 O Trinal Light, that in one star sublime  
 Dost with thy rays their soul so satisfy,  
 Look down with pity on our storm-beat clime! 30  
 If strangers, bred beneath some far-off sky,  
 Where day by day revolves fair Helice,  
 With him, her son, in whom her joy doth lie,  
 Gazing on Rome and all her majesty,  
 Were struck with wonder, when the Lateran 35  
 Was eminent above all things that be,  
 I, who to God had now passed on from man,  
 From time to that great sempiternal day,  
 From Florence to a people just and sane,—

<sup>19</sup> Actually, however (we are, as it were, gazing on the dissolving views of the poet's dream), the angels descend from the throne of God, which is above the rose. It might have been thought that their number would have obscured the glory of that throne; but the Divine Light cannot be so intercepted; it finds its way to whosoever is worthy of it.

<sup>26</sup> The people of old time and new are respectively those who lived before and after the coming of the Christ, the people of the Old and New Testaments.

<sup>28</sup> In the contemplation of the infinite peace of that Triune Light the poet, still tempest-tost and vexed, can but pray that it may work out a great calm for his own troubled soul, and for the yet more troubled world.

<sup>32</sup> Helice (Ovid, *Fast.* iii. 100) is identified (*Purg.* xxv. 131) with Callisto, and so with Ursa Major. The people thus described are those who came from the North, probably, *i.e.*, Germans, and found themselves in Rome. The words may be a reminiscence of such pilgrims in the year of the Jubilee (*H.* xviii. 29), but I incline to think that the scene now described was a more recent one, and that the thought of Henry VII.'s throne led on to the recollection of his coronation in St. John Lateran, when that church thus occupied a position of greatness which it had never held before or since. The Leonine city, including St. Peter's, was occupied at that time by the troops of Robert of Naples, and the Lateran, became, therefore, the Emperor's headquarters.

<sup>37</sup> In the structure of the poem the words are supposed to belong to the

Think what amazement then my soul did sway! 40  
 Truly with this and with the joy 'twas mine  
 To have no wish to hear, nor words to say.  
 And as a pilgrim who, with eager eyne,  
 Finds, gazing on a temple, full delight,  
 And hopes some day to tell how fair the shrine, 45  
 So, as I walked amid that living light,  
 On all around I also cast mine eye,  
 Now up, now down, and circling left or right.  
 Faces I saw that called forth charity;  
 Another's light and their own smiles shone there, 50  
 And gestures graced with every dignity.  
 That form of Paradise in outline fair  
 Already had my glance in full surveyed,  
 Not gazing yet with fixed glance anywhere;  
 And now I turned, with wish more ardent made, 55  
 To ask my Lady, as with doubt distress,  
 Of many things which on my spirit weighed.  
 One thing I meant : another met my quest,  
 I looked for Beatricè, and behold !  
 An old man, clothed as are the people blest. 60

year 1300. They were, as we know, written within the last few years or months of the poet's life. Age had not dulled the edge of his resentment. Florence still stood out in his memory as the greatest possible contrast to the city of God. It is the last allusion to Florence in the *Commedia*.

<sup>43</sup> Whether l. 34 referred to the Jubilee of 1300 or not, it at least led on by a natural association of ideas to the memories of that year. As he had seen pilgrims at St. Peter's look with wandering and wondering eyes over the great assembly of cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons, and the like, as they sat in their stalls, so was the poet now, in the Rome of which "Christ was a Roman" (*Purg.* xxxii. 102). He was as a "barbarian" in the midst of these wonders.

<sup>59</sup> The disappearance of Beatrice has been already noticed (*C.* xxx. 148). The seer is not as yet aware of her departure, but he turns as to her, and he finds St. Bernard. We can scarcely doubt, I think, that this somewhat startling change was meant to represent a like change in Dante's inner life. I venture to suggest that it indicates that he had passed, in his theological reading, from Aquinas to St. Bernard, and that, marvellous as was the dogmatic fulness and clearness of the former, he found in the latter that which raised him to a higher level of spiritual intuition. Throughout the *Paradise* Beatrice has been, as it were, the mouthpiece of the wisdom which Dante had learnt from St. Thomas, had answered every question, and drawn the lines of demarcation between truth and error. But there was something higher even than this, and in his case, as in that of a

His eyes and cheeks were flushed with joy untold,  
 Blended with look of mild benignity,  
 And pitying mien as of kind father old.  
 "And where is she?" I asked full instantly.  
 Then he: "That wish of thine to satisfy 65  
 Thy Beatrice from my place sent me;  
 And if to that third round thou turn thine eye,  
 From the first rank, thou'lt see her yet once more,  
 Upon the throne her merits gained on high."  
 Without reply my look I upwards bore, 70  
 And saw that she with glory bright was crowned,  
 The eternal rays reflecting evermore,  
 Not from that sphere where highest thunders sound  
 Is mortal eye so far removed in space,  
 In whatsoever sea's deep waters drowned, 75  
 As was my sight from Beatrice's face.  
 Yet this was nought to me; her image fair  
 Came not through medium that could mar its grace.

thousand others, St. Bernard had met a want which Aquinas had not met. And if I were asked to say what work of the Saint of Clairvaux had probably had this effect, I should name without any hesitation his eighty-five sermons on the *Song of Solomon* and the Homilies *De Laudibus Virginis Matris*.

61 The description corresponds exactly with all that is recorded of the fascinating sweetness and benignity of St. Bernard's character. It was given to him to be the master of the hearts of men, as Aquinas was of their intellect. "A youth of high birth, beautiful person, graceful manners, irresistible influence," is Milman's picture of the natural man (*L. C.* iv. 309), which has, as its companion portrait, a description of his work. "His preaching awed and won all hearts. Everywhere St. Bernard was called in as the great pacificator of religious, and even of civil, dissensions. His justice, his mildness, were equally commanding and persuasive" (*Ibid.* 313).

64 One notes the supreme naturalness of the question, "Where is she?" not "Where is Beatrice?"

68 The departure of Beatrice is explained. It was time to fulfil the resolve with which the *V. N.* ended. He returns to the personal Beatrice whom he had loved, and she ceases to be, as Divine Wisdom or Theology, the interpreter of Aquinas. He will place her, the daughter of Folco de' Portinari, side by side with Rachel, the companion of the Virgin and St. Lucia (*H.* ii. 94-102). She is seen with the crown, the *aureola* of saints (Aquinas, *Summ.* iii., *Suppl.* 961). She is far above, at an immeasurable distance from him; yet, as there the "far" or "near" of the Empyrean are not as those on earth, he sees her clearly.



"Lady, in whom my hope breathes quickening air,  
 And who for my salvation didst endure 80  
 To pass to Hell and leave thy footprints there,  
 Of all mine eyes have seen with vision pure,  
 As coming from thy goodness and thy might,  
 I the full grace and mercy know full sure.  
 Thou me, a slave, to freedom didst invite, 85  
 By all the means and all the methods whence  
 The power could spring to work such ends aright.  
 Still keep for me thy great munificence,  
 So that my soul, which owes its health to thee,  
 May please thee, free from each corporeal sense." 90  
 So prayed I, and in that her distance she,  
 When she had looked, with loving smile, again  
 Turned to the Fount that flows eternally.  
 Then spake the old man holy: "That thou gain  
 The wished-for goal of this thine enterprise, 95  
 To help in which me prayer and love constrain,  
 Around this garden fly thou with thine eyes;  
 For seeing it will make thy glance more keen  
 Further along the ray divine to rise.  
 Then she for whom I burn, Heaven's gracious  
 Queen, 100  
 With fullest love, will every grace supply,  
 Because in me her faithful Bernard's seen."

<sup>79</sup> The lover becomes the worshipper and pours out his gratitude. For his sake Beatrice had trodden the paths of Hell (*H.* ii. 70). By many ways, the visions he had had on earth (*Purg.* xxx. 134; *V. N.* c. 40, 43), she had led him onward and upward from his bondage of sin to the glorious liberty of the children of God (*Rom.* vi. 20, viii. 21).

<sup>93</sup> The eternal fountain, the source of light and joy, is the presence of God, and Beatrice's glance is her prayer of intercession, answering to the poet's entreaty for her help.

<sup>97</sup> The garden is in the strictest sense the Paradise of God (*C.* xxiii. 71, xxxii. 39). The love and prayers of Beatrice have commissioned Bernard to guide the poet in this last stage of his "pilgrim's progress;" and the Queen of Heaven is there, ready to help him in answer to the prayers of the saint who was conspicuously her "*faithful Bernard*." As a matter of history, few men contributed more than the Saint of Clairvaux did to the *cultus* of the Virgin, which spread over Europe in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries, and left its mark in the hymnology, the painting, the sculpture, and the architecture of Western Christendom. The lady-chapels of this period were the

As one who from Croatia, say, draws nigh  
 Upon our Veronica's face to glance,  
 Whom the old story does not satisfy, 105  
 Says, while he sees it, as in wondering trance,  
 "My Lord, my Jesus Christ, true Deity,  
 Was this indeed Thy very countenance?"  
 So was I, as I turned mine eyes to see  
 The living love of him who, while on earth, 110  
 Tasted this peace in contemplation free.

outcome of the teaching of the *Laudes B. V. M.* already referred to, and still more in *Ep.* 74, where he describes her as "*reverendam angelis, desideratam gentibus, patriarchis prophetisque præcognitam, electam ex omnibus . . . prælatam omnibus . . . gratiæ inventricem, mediatricem salutis, restauratricem sæculorum . . . exaltatam super choros angelorum ad cælestia regna.*" It is worth noting that all these epithets occur in a letter to the Canons of Lyons *against* the Feast, then recently introduced, of the Immaculate Conception. Against that feast he protests as "*contra ecclesiæ ritum præsumpta novitas, mater temeritatis, soror superstitionis, filia levitatis.*"

103 Another reminiscence, probably of the year of the Jubilee—the exhibition of the *sudarium* or handkerchief on which it was believed the Lord Jesus had left the imprint of His features. The Vera Icon (= true image), which popular usage corrupted into *Veronica*, was one of the distinguishing features of the solemnities of that year (*Vill.* viii. 36; *V. N.* c. 41, but the latter may refer to an earlier exhibition). For the history of the Veronica, see Herzog, *Real. Encycl.* xvii. p. 86. The main points of the legend are that Veronica (the name given to the woman who had tendered the *sudarium* to Christ), had come to Rome in the time of Tiberius; that Clement of Rome had left it as an heirloom to his successors. Mediæval writers, however, Gervase of Tilbury (1210), Matt. Paris (1216), speak of the *effigies* itself as the Veronica, and Dante uses the same language. Bede, by a curious combination, identifies Veronica with the woman healed of an issue of blood, of whom Euseb. (vii. 17, 18) reports that a group of sculpture, including her form and that of the Christ, was to be seen at Paneas, the Cæsarea Philippi of the Gospel. It is at least probable that the old Latin sequence, "*O salve sacra facies,*" and St. Bernard's hymn, "*Salve caput cruentatum,*" may have originated in it.

103 Croatia may have been chosen through the necessities of rhyme, but it serves as a typical instance of the distance from which the pilgrims came. Lines 106–108 may fairly be thought of as representing Dante's own feelings at the time of the Jubilee.

111 I quote once more from St. Bernard (*Meditt. Piiss.* c. 1), as showing why Dante chose him as the guide who was to lead him onward to the goal of the final vision of God. "*Patrem namque et Filium cum Sancto Spiritu cognoscere, vita est æterna, beatitudo perfecta, summa voluptas. Oculis non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit quanta claritas, quanta suavitas, et quanta jucunditas maneat nos in illa visione, quando Deum facie ad faciem vidimus: qui est lux illuminatorum, requies exercitatorum, patria redeuntium, vita viventium, corona vincentium.*"

"Thou son of grace," then said he, "this glad mirth  
 In which we live will ne'er to thee be known  
 By fixing gaze on things of lower worth;  
 But to the circles most remote look on, 115  
 Until thou see the Queen who rules on high,  
 Whom all this kingdom doth with homage own."  
 I raised mine eyes, and as the morning sky,  
 Where the horizon bounds the Eastern clime,  
 Excels the region where the sunbeams die, 120  
 So, as doth one who from the vale doth climb  
 To mountain height, I saw a space afar  
 All else surpassing in its light sublime.  
 And e'en as there, where we await the car  
 Which Phæthon drove badly, burns more clear 125  
 Its light, while this and that side dimmer are,  
 So did that peaceful oriflamme appear,  
 More living in its centre, and each side  
 In equal measure slackened flame did wear.  
 And at that centre, with their wings spread wide, 130  
 More than a thousand angels met my sight,  
 Joyous, in light and act diversified;  
 And in their songs and sports a beauty bright  
 I saw, whose smile makes glad, with fullest joy,  
 The eyes of all the other saints in light. 135

<sup>115</sup> The downward look implied imperfect contemplation of heavenly things. What was needed was a *Sursum Corda*, upward to the Queen of Angels, and beyond her, to the Divine Tri-unity.

<sup>125</sup> The Phaethon mythus was obviously much in Dante's mind (C. xvii. 3; *H.* xvii. 107; *Purg.* xxix. 118). The point indicated is that where sunrise is expected, where there is the maximum of brightness, while on either side the glory diminishes.

<sup>127</sup> The Oriflamme was, according to one tradition, the banner, the *Labarum*, under which Constantine fought and conquered. Historically it was the flag of the Abbey of St. Denis, adopted by Philip Augustus as that of the French kings. The pole was gilt, the flag scarlet, divided at its edge into flame-shaped strips. Here it is applied to the company of saints that surrounded the Virgin, which grew brighter in proportion to its nearness; and the banner is described as "peaceful," as belonging to the Empyrean of Peace, in contrast with the warlike use of the Oriflamme on earth.

<sup>132</sup> I have, with most experts, taken *arte* as pointing to the office, function, or "act" of the several angels.

<sup>134</sup> The "beauty" is that of the Virgin Mother, who looked on the angels with an approving smile which was reflected in their joy. That again

And could I in my speech such wealth employ  
 As in my fancy's flight, I should not dare  
 To touch the edge of bliss without alloy.  
 And Bernard, when he saw that I stood there  
 With eyes fixed fast upon that glowing blaze, 140  
 Turned his to her with love so rich and rare  
 That mine more eager made thereon to gaze.

## CANTO XXXII

*The Saints in the Rose of Heaven—St. John Baptist, Rachel,  
 Beatrice, Lucia, and others*

WRAPT in his joy, that contemplative man  
 Took the free office of a teacher true,  
 And with these holy words he now began:  
 "That wound which Mary healed with ointment new,  
 She, who so fair is sitting at her feet, 5  
 Both made the wound and laid it bare to view.

belonged to the things which it was not possible for Dante, or for any man, to utter.

<sup>2</sup> St. Bernard resumes his function as one of the great doctors of the Church. The picture presented to our eyes is that of a vast circular area, the half of the mystic rose, in which tier rises above tier. In the middle of the topmost row of one semicircle is the Virgin Mother, and in a line below her, bisecting the semicircle, are Eve, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruth, and other holy women of Israel. On the one side of that line are the female saints of the Old Testament, on the other those of the New. Opposite the Virgin, in the other semicircle and on the same level, is the Baptist; below him stand St. Francis, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, who, in their turn, divide the Old and New Testament saints as before.

<sup>4</sup> The Virgin is described as anointing, *i.e.*, healing (*Mark* vi. 13; *James* v. 14) the wound of sin which Eve, who is seated below her, had inflicted. The words are almost a quotation from Augustine, "*illa percussit, illa sanavit*" (*Serm.* xviii.). Beatrice, as representing Contemplative Wisdom, is found (as in *H.* ii. 102, iv. 60) in company with her and with Rachel (*Purg.* xxvii. 104). In *V. N.* c. 29 she is spoken of as called to be "under the banner of the Queen of Angels, whom she had adored on earth." Judith finds her place with Sarah and Rebecca, on the strength probably of *Judith* xv. 10; perhaps also as representing the life of action, in contrast to Rachel. *Matt.* i. 5, suggested the name of Ruth. These are followed by unnamed Hebrew women, who form a wall of partition between those who lived before and after Christ.

Within that order made by yon third seat,  
 Is sitting Rachel, 'neath that other fair,  
 With Beatrice, who thy gaze doth meet;  
 Rebecca, Sarah, Judith, these are there, 10  
 And she who was the Psalmist's ancestress,  
 Who poured in grief his *Miserere* prayer.  
 There thou may'st see, in glory less and less,  
 From seat to seat, as I, with each one's name,  
 From leaf to leaf through all the Rose progress; 15  
 And from the seventh row downward, e'en the same  
 As downward to it, parting every leaf  
 Of that fair flower, appears each Hebrew dame;  
 For, as from this side, or from that, belief  
 In Christ looked on Him, these are as a wall, 20  
 Between those holy stairs partition chief.  
 On this side, where, with petals perfect all,  
 The flower is found, those souls their seat have won  
 Whose faith upon the Christ to come did call:  
 On that side, where the semicircles meet 25  
 A vacant space that parts them, duly stand  
 Who the Christ come with yearning glance did  
 greet.  
 As on this side, a throne of high command  
 For Heaven's high Queen, and every other throne  
 Beneath it, part the space on either hand, 30  
 So on the other that of the great John,  
 Who, ever holy, bore the desert drear,  
 And pain of death, and Hell two years had known.

<sup>26</sup> Among the rows of seats reserved for the latter there were some empty places—as, *e.g.*, that for Henry VII.—but not many. Probably Dante wrote under the impression, which never quite forsook the mediæval mind, though it varied in its intensity, that the coming of the Christ to judge was not far off. He too might have written *Appropinquante jam fine sæculi*, as men did in the 10th century. The readings, however, vary, and some MSS. give *di voto*, and others *devoti*.

<sup>32</sup> The Baptist remained, in Dante's theory, in Hell, *i.e.*, in the *Limbus Patrum*, till the Crucifixion and the Descent into Hades. Till then none had entered Paradise. As in the *Te Deum*, it was not till Christ had "overcome the sharpness of death" that He "opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

Next down the parting line the lot was there  
 Of Francis, Benedict, and Augustine, 35  
 And others down to us from tier to tier.  
 Now see the depth of Providence divine;  
 For of the faith to this or that aspect  
 This garden filled doth equal space assign.  
 And know that, from the step which cleaves direct 40  
 Midway the order of those sections two,  
 Sit those, to merit who no claim affect,  
 But plead Another's, with conditions due;  
 For all these spirits were absolved on high,  
 Before of choice they had possession true. 45

<sup>35</sup> The order of the three names is suggestive. Francis of Assisi is still, as in C. xi., the Saint of his affections. Of Benedict he had sung the praises in C. xxii. 28; of Augustine he had spoken in passing in C. x. 120. Symmetry would have led us to expect a line of Hebrew heroes, as there had been Hebrew heroines on the other side. Probably Dante's view of the Baptist as the starting-point of a new order led him to a different selection.

<sup>39</sup> The thought which Dante puts into St. Bernard's lips, that the number of the saved before and after Christ would be exactly equal, is not found in Aquinas; nor, so far as I know, in any of the schoolmen, nor have I succeeded in tracing it in Bernard's writings. It would seem almost as if a new dogma had commended itself to Dante's mind that the symmetry of his mystic rose might not be marred.

<sup>40</sup> To the same love of symmetry we may probably ascribe the dogma, which now apparently meets us, that the number of the saved who have died in infancy corresponds exactly with that of the saved adults. They fill the lower benches of each semicircle of the great area. As I try to represent the scene which Dante describes, I cannot resist the conviction that he must have drawn his picture, not from any Papal rose or rose-window, though these may have floated before his mind as similitudes (see note on C. xxx. 117), but from the Coliseum as he may have seen it filled with Henry VII.'s army, or more probably from the amphitheatre of Verona, which if it were ever filled (it is said to be capable of holding 95,000 persons) might well suggest the thought, as a like scene did to the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, of the "great cloud of witnesses," the "innumerable company of angels," the "assembly of the Church of the first-born" (*Heb.* xii. 1, 22, 23). In such a gathering it would be natural that the lower benches should be reserved for children. I must own, however, that I have not as yet found any record that the amphitheatre was so used in Dante's time. The games referred to in *H.* xv. 122 were held outside the Porta del Palio.

<sup>43</sup> The question has been raised whether the "merits of others," through which children are saved, are those of their parents, or, as Aquinas taught, of the Church (*Summ.* iii. 69, 8), or of Christ. Most of the earlier commentators take the former view; most modern ones the latter. Line 78 is decisive, it seems to me, in favour of the former. The "certain conditions" are circumcision for Jewish, baptism for Christian children. They had no merits of their own because they had not attained to the "*vere elezioni*," *sc.*

Well may'st thou this in every face descry,  
 And also in their voices' child-like tone,  
 If thou look well and list attentively.  
 Now dost thou doubt, thy doubt by silence shown;  
 But I will loosen for thee the strong chain 50  
 Which by thy subtle thoughts is round thee thrown.  
 Within the ample range of this domain  
 No place is found for any point of chance,  
 No more than is for hunger, thirst, or pain;  
 For by eternal law each circumstance 55  
 Thou see'st is fixed, and all with it agree,  
 As to the finger fits the ring's expanse.  
 And so this people, sped by God's decree  
 To His true life, not *sine causâ* shows  
 Its excellence in manifold degree. 60  
 The King, through whom this kingdom true peace  
 knows,  
 In so great love, and in so great delight,  
 That no desire dare ask for more repose,  
 All minds creating joyous in His sight,  
 Doth, in His pleasure, fill with His free grace 65  
 Diversely. Rest content; the effect is right.

the power of choice between good and evil, which comes when reason guides the will.

<sup>46</sup> The words imply that the spirits in Paradise remain at the age in which they depart this life. In this Dante differs from Aquinas (*Summ. iii. Supp.* 81, 1, 2), who teaches that all the saints will rise of the same age, *sc.*, in the bloom of a perpetual youth, though he admits that those who died in advanced life may have the venerableness, though not the infirmities, of age. Dante's thought that he sees children's faces and hears their voices in souls in Paradise seems to me the natural outcome of the love of child-life of which we have found so many instances (*Purg.* xxx. 44, 79, xxxi. 64, *et al.*). His retaining this is as eminently characteristic as the subtle questioning spirit (l. 45) which remains with him to the last.

<sup>53</sup> The first point in the solution of the untold problem is that chance is excluded altogether, even as hunger and thirst find no place in Heaven (*Rev.* vii. 16, xxi. 4). The reign of law is supreme throughout; therefore the difference of degree, indicated by higher or lower places, which had stirred Dante's mind to questions, is not without a cause. That cause here is the will of God, which, loving all souls, yet distributes gifts and graces according to His will. Children therefore are, as it were, classed according to the "promise and potency" of the grace they have thus received, though they have never been developed upon earth.

And this express and clear thou now may'st trace  
 In Holy Scripture, in those brothers twain  
 Who in the womb were stirred to wrath apace;  
 Therefore on locks of different hue 'tis plain, 70  
 The Light Supreme, through measured grace  
 supplied,  
 Doth place a crown accordant with the grain.  
 Thus, without merit from their works, abide  
 The people here, each one in different tier,  
 Just as their primal vision-powers decide. 75  
 Thus in more early times enough was there  
 For their salvation, if to innocence  
 Were simply joined the faith of parents dear.  
 When the first ages did to close commence,  
 'Twas meet for males by circumcision's sign, 80  
 To guiltless wings new virtue to dispense.  
 But when there came the time of grace divine,  
 Without the baptism perfected of Christ,  
 Such innocence was kept on lower line.  
 Now look upon the face which unto Christ 85  
 Bears most resemblance, for its brightness clear  
 Alone can fit thee to behold the Christ."

68 As an example of that diversity, Dante, following St. Paul (*Rom.* ix. 13-16), takes Esau and Jacob. Esau was believed to have had the red hair implied in his name, Edom, while Jacob's hair was black. And the two colours were held to be symbols of different temperaments, of different destinies. So it was, Dante argued, with all children. Their crown of light varies with the character, of which even the colour of their hair may be an indication; and so they occupy higher or lower ranks, not through formed habits, but through the difference of their primary capacities. Augustine, it may be noted, takes the two sons of Isaac as a crucial instance against the theory that men's destinies were decided by the stars (*C. D.* v. 1-5). Dante does not indicate how he reconciled his theory of stellar influence with the difficulty thus presented.

77 The three conditions of the salvation of infants were: (1) In the early, *i.e.*, the patriarchal, age, simply their own innocence and their parents' faith. (2) From Abraham onwards circumcision was required in addition. (3) Under the Gospel, baptism took the place of circumcision. Without the latter even the innocence of infants could not save them from the *Limbus* assigned to them in *H.* iv. 30-35.

85 The poet's mind is turned from questioning to contemplation. He is to look on the face of the Virgin Mother, which of all faces is the most like her Son's. Only through her could the worshipper become fit to gaze on that Son's brightness.



Showered o'er her face I saw such joy appear,  
 And flow out from her on each mind in bliss,  
 Created for its flight o'er that high sphere, 90  
 That whatsoever I had seen ere this  
 Did not my soul in wonder so suspend,  
 Nor show so clear what God's high semblance is.  
 And that same Love that first did there descend,  
 Singing his "Ave Mary, full of grace," 95  
 Before her did his ample wings extend.  
 To that high song the Court of that blest place  
 Made answer full and loud on every side,  
 And calmer joy was seen on every face.  
 "O holy father, who for me dost bide 100  
 Awhile below, and leavest thy sweet seat,  
 Where lot eternal calls thee to abide;  
 Who is that angel that, with joy replete,  
 Looks in the eyes of this our heavenly Queen,  
 Enamoured so that fire he seems in heat?" 105  
 So on his teaching I once more did lean,  
 Who grew more beautiful from Mary's light,  
 As from the sun the morning star serene.  
 And he to me: "All joy and valour bright,  
 That or in angel or man's soul is wrought, 110  
 Is found in him, and this is our delight:  
 For this is he whose hand the palm-branch brought  
 To Mary, when the Son of God most High  
 To bear the weight of all our burden sought.

89 The "minds in bliss" are those of the angels, created to fly (as in C. xxx. 64-69) between the throne of God and the souls of the saints.

108 As St. Bernard answers the poet's question, his face glows with a new beauty, as the morning star seen at sunrise.

111 The souls of the saints accept, without a touch of envy (C. xx. 138), the higher glory which the will of God has assigned to Gabriel.

113 Bernard proceeds to point out the more conspicuous occupants of Paradise. The Virgin becomes "Augusta," the Empress of that kingdom, as God had been named the Emperor (C. xii. 40, xxv. 41; *H.* i. 124). Next to her on the left is Adam and on the right St. Peter. The "fair flower" is the mystic rose, *sc.*, the glorified Church, the kingdom of Heaven. Next in order come the Seer of the Apocalypse and Moses; then Anna, who appears in the Gospel of the Infancy as the mother of the Virgin, and with her (here

But come now, follow with thine eyes, as I 115  
Shall tell thee as I go, and those great peers  
Of this most just and holy realm descry.  
Those twain in whom all blessed joy appears,  
Since nearest to our Empress they abide, 120  
Are as two roots, and each this rose upbears.  
He, on the left hand, standing at her side,  
Is the great Father through whose daring taste  
The human race such bitterness hath tried:  
On the right hand see the ancient Father placed 125  
Of Holy Church, who was from Christ alone  
With keys of this fair flower of beauty graced;  
And he who saw, while yet life's course did run,  
All the dark coming years of that fair Bride,  
Who with the spear and nails was wooed and  
won,  
Beside him sits; and on the other side 130  
The leader under whom the manna fed  
The people, thankless, wayward, stiff with pride.  
O'er against Peter see'st thou Anna's head,  
So glad to look upon her daughter's face,  
Her eye moved not as she 'Hosanna' said. 135  
And o'er against the Father of our race  
Sits Lucia, she who called thy Lady fair,  
When thou to foul shame didst thy brow abase.  
But since thy time of vision fast doth wear,  
Here will we stop as doth the tailor wise, 140  
Who makes his coat as he hath cloth to spare.

we have the name that has met us before in *H. ii. 97, Purg. ix. 55*) St. Lucia, whose special favour to the poet is again noted.

140 The minds of critics have been much exercised by the commonness, not to say vulgarity, of the comparison. Dante, I imagine, would have said that the proverb said what he wanted, and would perhaps have added, "*Lascia dir le genti*" (*Purg. v. 13*). This was what he said to himself when he found himself within one Canto of his appointed bourne. This he would say to others in explanation of his seeming haste to finish. He might have pleaded that a proverb as common had once found a place in the history of St. Paul's conversion (*Acts. ix. 5*).

And to the Primal Love bend we our eyes,  
 That, looking on Him, thou as far may'st wend  
 As, through its brightness, in thy nature lies.  
 In very deed, lest thy course backward tend, 145  
 Moving thy wings and thinking to progress,  
 'Tis meet that prayer the help of grace should lend.  
 This grace she gives who helps thee in distress,  
 And thou shalt follow with affection  
 So that my words cease not thy heart to bless." 150  
 And so he spake this holy orison.

## CANTO XXXIII

*St. Bernard's Prayer to the Blessed Virgin—The Beatific  
 Vision of the Eternal Trinity and the Word made Flesh*

"O VIRGIN Mother, daughter of thy Son,  
 Lowlier and loftier than all creatures seen,  
 Goal of the counsels of the Eternal One,  
 Thyself art she who this our nature mean  
 Hast so ennobled that its Maker great 5  
 Deigned to become what through it made had been.  
 In thy blest womb the Love renewed its heat  
 By whose warm glow in this our peace eterne  
 This heavenly flower first did germinate.

<sup>142</sup> In *H.* iii. 6 the term "primal Love" is specially applied to the Holy Spirit; here it is used of the Godhead in its triune perfection (*C.* xxxiii. 115-120).

<sup>146</sup> The thought is reproduced from *Purg.* xi. 15. There is no true progress without the grace of God, and here that progress is thought of as coming through the intercession of the Virgin Mother.

<sup>1</sup> The *cultus* of the Virgin has, I suppose, never found a nobler utterance than that which, placed in the lips of St. Bernard, ushers in Dante's last Canto. Comp. Chaucer's paraphrase in his *Second Nonne's Tale*, ll. 29-56 (*Bull.*).

<sup>3</sup> Apparently a combination of *Prov.* viii. 22 and *Gal.* iv. 4. The Incarnation, with which the Virgin was identified, had entered into the Eternal counsels, and was manifested in the "fulness of time."

<sup>9</sup> The "flower" is the mystic rose, *i.e.*, the Church triumphant of the saved. Its existence depended on the birth of the Man Christ Jesus, and

Here, in Love's noon-tide brightness, thou dost burn <sup>10</sup>  
 For us in glory; and to mortal sight  
 Art living fount of hope to all that yearn.  
 Lady, thou art so great and of such might,  
 That he who seeks grace yet turns not to thee,  
 Would have his prayer, all wingless, take its flight; <sup>15</sup>  
 Nor only doth thy kind benignity  
 Give help to him who asks, but many a time  
 Doth it prevent the prayer in bounty free.  
 In thee is mercy, pity, yea, sublime  
 Art thou in greatness, and in thee, with it, <sup>20</sup>  
 Whate'er of good is in creation's clime.  
 He who stands here, who, from the lowest pit  
 Of all creation, to this point hath pass'd  
 The lines of spirits, each in order fit,  
 On thee for grace of strength himself doth cast, <sup>25</sup>  
 So that he may his eyes in vision raise  
 Upwards to that Salvation noblest, last.  
 And I, who never for my power to gaze  
 Burnt more than now for his, pour all my prayer,  
 And pray it meet not failure nor delays: <sup>30</sup>  
 Wherefore do thou all clouds that yet impair  
 His vision with mortality remove,  
 That he may see the joy beyond compare.  
 And next I pray thee, Queen, whose power doth  
 prove  
 Matched with thy will, that thou wilt keep his  
 mind, <sup>35</sup>  
 After such gaze, that thence it may not rove.

He was born of the Virgin. To those who had won their victory she was as a burning light of love; to those below she was the fount of hope. 'The early commentators quote from St. Bernard, "*Securum accessum habes, O homo, ad Deum, ubi Mater est ante filium et Filius ante patrem.*"

<sup>16</sup> So it was that Dante at the close of life looked back on his own conversion. Was it not the Virgin Mother who had sent Lucia and Beatrice to his aid (*H. ii. 94*)? Would not she who had begun the work help him to complete it?

<sup>34</sup> We have passed, we must remember, beyond what we call "poetical invocations," and have the heart-prayers of the poet. He fears lest the vision of glory may fail to sanctify and ennoble his after life. He prays that

Let thy control all human impulse bind;  
 See Beatricè, how through my prayers she  
 And many a saint their hands in prayer have  
 joined."

The eyes which God with love and praise doth see, <sup>40</sup>  
 Fixed on the pleader, showed us clear and plain  
 How dear to her are prayers that earnest be.

Then to the Light eterne they looked again,  
 Whereon one scarce can dream that eye most clear  
 Of any creature might its gaze maintain. <sup>45</sup>

And I, who at that hour was drawing near  
 The end of all my longings, as was meet,  
 The ardour of my yearnings ended here.

Then me with nod and smile did Bernard greet,  
 That I should upward look, but I became, <sup>50</sup>  
 E'en of myself, full apt his wish to meet;

For as my vision to more pureness came,  
 Still more and more it passed within the rays  
 Of that high, bright, self-verifying flame.

he may live worthily of his high vocation. Bernard, Beatrice, and all the saints will join in that prayer for his future.

<sup>40</sup> Was the thought one of pure imagination, or did Dante combine in successive acts the downward look of compassion, the upturned glance of prayer, as he had seen them in the paintings of Cimabue or Giotto? To us the works of those painters seem to fall far below the beauty of which the poet speaks, and we think rather of the Madonnas of Raphael. But we must remember that to their contemporaries they must have presented, as in the story of Vasari and the Borgo Allegri (Lindsay, *C. A.* i. 344) a new ideal of grace, or at least a groundwork on which the mind could build its ideal.

<sup>46</sup> Once again we have the axiom, the common inheritance of the devout thinkers of all mankind, of the *Convito* as well as of the *Commedia*, of Augustine and Aquinas, that God is the end and goal to which all human desires and aspirations naturally tend, unless nature is corrupted (*Summ.* i. 2, 1-5, 122, 2; *Aug. Conf.* i. 1).

<sup>50</sup> The seer looks upward from the company of the Saints, even from the Virgin Mother, to the true Eternal Light. Memory and speech alike failed to reproduce the vision. He remembers an ineffable intuition, which is gone from him never to return in this life; but there remains an equally ineffable sweetness to bear witness that it has been his. Snow that has lost its form or colour, the Sibylline leaves that float at random through the air (*Æn.* iii. 441-451), are types of his consciousness of what the dream, the vision, had been. All that he can do is to pray to the Source of all Light for the power to reproduce for future ages some fragments of that glorious moment, the foretaste and earnest of the beatific vision of the future.

Thence on far greater glory was my gaze 55  
Than speech can tell; at that transcendent sight,  
All memory fails and shrinks in blank amaze.  
As one who dreams in visions of the night,  
And when the dream is o'er, the sense imprest 60  
Remains, nor sees the mind aught else aright,  
So am I; for nigh all that vision blest  
Has passed away, and yet its bliss is felt,  
Distilling all its sweetness through my breast.  
So doth the snow before the sunbeams melt;  
So to the winds on leaves all borne astray 65  
Was tost the speech in which the Sibyl dealt.  
O Light Supreme, that dwellest far away  
From mortal thoughts, grant Thou this soul of  
mine  
Some scant revival of that great display,  
And to my tongue give Thou such strength divine, 70  
That of Thy glory at the least one beam  
May to the race to come in beauty shine.  
That, as I call to mind some little gleam,  
And some faint echo sounds in this my song,  
Men of Thy victory will more truly deem. 75  
I trow that so I suffered from the strong  
And vivid light, that I as lost had been,  
If from it these mine eyes had turned for long;  
And I remember how I grew more keen  
By this to bear it, so that I did blend 80  
My gaze with Might to which no end is seen.  
O grace abounding, which to me did lend  
Courage to look upon that Light eterne,  
Yea, all my power of sight thereon to spend !

<sup>76</sup> A profound spiritual significance underlies the psychological fact. While we contemplate Divine Perfection we lose the consciousness of our own impotence. The sense of being dazzled and darkened with excess of light comes when we return from that contemplation to the lower region of our earthly life. As far and as long as he could he gazed upon the glorious vision, and that gaze was the condition of its continuance.

In its abysmal depths mine eye did learn, 85  
 Bound in one volume with the Love divine,  
 The law on which the universe doth turn:  
 Substance and accident and modes combine,  
 All blent together in such order due,  
 That what I tell as simple light doth shine. 90  
 The universal form, I deem, I knew,  
 Of this great complex Whole, since greater joy,  
 As I say this, pervades me through and through.  
 A moment there more memory did destroy 95  
 Than all the ages, five beyond the score,  
 Since Neptune saw the Argo's shade flit by.  
 Thus stayed my mind, still gazing o'er and o'er,  
 With fixèd and immovable attent,  
 And, as it gazed, was kindled more and more.  
 Before that Light one grows to such content 100  
 That to turn back from it to aught beside  
 The soul can never possibly consent;

87 His first vision is, so to speak, metaphysical. He sees, in that light, pure substance, absolute self-existence, that which is manifested in manifold forms, the accidents of that substance, the loose sheets, as it were (the thought of the Sibylline leaves seems to be with him still), of Omnipotence, bound in one volume with the Eternal Love.

92 The mingled sense of memory and oblivion of which he had spoken before (ll. 61-63) is with him still. He believes that he is right in saying that he had seen the "universal form," the *Natura naturans*, of the complex structure of the *Natura naturata*; for in saying that, he is conscious of a sense of enlargement and of joy.

94 The comparison is somewhat obscure and has vexed the minds of commentators. The thought, however, seems to be that a single moment brought to the seer's mind a more complete oblivion of the glorious vision than twenty-five centuries had brought to the world of the earliest historical events, of which the Argonautic expedition is taken as a type. The wonder of Neptune at the shadow of the first ship that passed over his waters is commonly referred to Catull. *Epithal. Pet.* 14. There, however, the Nereids are those who wonder, and I am disposed to think that Dante had in his thoughts Val. Flacc. (*Argon.* i. 641-645).

101 As the beatific vision constitutes the supreme blessedness of the Saints, the soul that has once tasted of its joy can never voluntarily turn to anything below it. The bliss is one which ensures, for those who know it, its own permanence (Aquinas. *Summ.* i. 2, 5, 4). There alone is the Supreme Good, and all outside is either a counterfeit, or a defective and imperfect, good. We turn, in Browning's phrase, from "Man's nothing perfect to God's all complete" (*Saul*).

Seeing that the good, by which is satisfied  
 Our will, is centred there; outside that rest,  
 Defect attends what perfect there doth bide. 105  
 Now shall my speech more briefly be comprest,  
 Compared with my remembrance, than is seen  
 The babe's who bathes his lips upon the breast.  
 Not because more than one pure form serene 110  
 Was in the living Light I gazed upon,  
 Which ever is what It hath ever been,  
 But through the sight, which greater force had won  
 In me by gazing, one Form met mine eye  
 Still varying as I changed, yet ever One; 115  
 In the profound bright substance seen on high  
 Of that clear light three circles seemed to glow  
 Of threefold colour, knit in unity;  
 And as one rainbow by another, so  
 This was by that reflected, while the third  
 As fire appeared that from them both did flow. 120  
 Ah me! how brief and stammering now is heard  
 All speech compared with thought, and that to this  
 I saw is such that "small" is scarce the word.  
 O Light Eternal, who, of all that is,  
 Dwell'st in Thyself, and know'st Thyself alone, 125  
 And knowing, lov'st Thyself, Thyself thy bliss!

107 Even of the fragment that is remembered of that vision, the poet's words must be wary and few, as those of an infant not yet weaned (*Ps.* cxxxi. 3).

109 What has to be described, as far as speech avails, is the glory of the Trinity in Unity. It is simple, one, for evermore the same, and yet there is in that oneness a threefold and distinct glory. One notes, not without satisfaction, that Dante shrinks from the anthropomorphism of Byzantine and early Western Art, in which the Ancient of Days was represented in the form of venerable age (*Lindsay, C. A. i. 248*). For him, as for the more primitive Christian artists (*Ibid. i. 8*), the rainbow reflecting rainbow (*Rev. iv. 3*) is the only adequate symbol of the "God of God, Light of Light" of the Nicene Creed, while the fire of love that breathes from both is that of the Holy Spirit, "proceeding from the Father and the Son." But even that symbolism is so faint and poor that it is not enough to say that it is infinitely little by the side of the infinitely great. The Light which he sees, the very Being of God, alone comprehends Itself, and finds in that self-knowledge Its supreme love and bliss.



That interpenetration which, as shown,  
 Appeared in Thee as 'twere reflected light,  
 As on mine eyes in measure faint it shone,  
 Within itself, in its own radiance bright, 130  
 Seemed to me to present our image clear,  
 Wherefore upon it full fixed was my sight.  
 As doth the expert geometer appear,  
 Who seeks to square the circle, and whose skill  
 Finds not the law by which his course to steer, 135  
 So was I, as that sight my soul did fill:  
 Fain would I see that form in circle set,  
 And how, within, it found its true place still;  
 But for that task my wings were feeble yet,  
 Only my mind was stricken through and through, 140  
 As by a flash that all my yearning met.  
 Strength failed that lofty vision to pursue;  
 But now, as whirls a wheel with nought to jar,  
 Desire and will were swayed in order due  
 By Love, that moves the sun and every star. 145

<sup>131</sup> The human element, however, is not entirely absent. In that "Light of Light," the Eternal Son, the poet sees a human form and features, "perfect God and perfect Man."

<sup>133</sup> So in *Conv.* ii. 14, *Mon.* iii. 3, the squaring of the circle is stated as a problem beyond the reach of man's powers, being coupled with the question as to the number of angels, as points which, for that reason, men had ceased to discuss. Any mathematical student in the 13th or 14th century might, of course, have come to that conclusion, but I incline to think that this is one of the instances in which, as in *C.* ii. 61-148, we may trace in Dante the pupil of Roger Bacon. The principle which is sought in vain is the exact relation of the circumference to the diameter.

<sup>145</sup> According to the poet's plan, the third *Cantica* of his great poem ended, as the other two had done, with the word "star." As he wrote that word and laid down his pen, the long task of twenty years or more came to its close. There was no longer that to work on, no longer that for which to bring out the "things new and old" which that all-searching intellect had gathered into its treasury, to which Heaven and Earth had alike contributed (*C.* xxv. 2). That channel for the utterance of his thoughts was closed. We ask, but cannot answer the question, did he really look on his work as finished in all its parts? Or did he polish and repolish, add or alter, insert or modify, allusive references to persons, places, theories of philosophy or theology? I incline to the belief that little or nothing of this kind was done after he had finished the *Paradiso*, and sent it, or part of it, to Can Grande. The work was done, and, with the lofty self-confidence of his nature, he felt sure that it would live. *Comp. Ep. to C. G. c. 3.*

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